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HOW TO ARRANGE AND WRITE-UP A STAMP COLLECTION

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INTRODUCTION

IN view of the importance now attached to the condition of postage stamps, it is surprising how little has been written on the question of the condition of stamp collections as a whole—how the stamps should be mounted and arranged to the best advantage and what written notes should accompany them in order that they may tell their message. Apart from a few articles in the philatelic press, sundry chapters in general works on the hobby, and one or two pamphlets, the subject of arranging and writing-up collections has been largely neglected.

The first edition of this volume was, we believe, the first attempt to deal thoroughly with this important question, and particularly in so far as it attempted to show the reader how to acquire the knack of lettering his album pages neatly and artistically. That it ran to four printings with a five-figure total is proof enough that its readers found in its pages what they had long wanted.

To this, the second edition, two chapters have been added on new subjects of great interest to collectors. Full practical details are now given on how to write-up black-leaf albums which have come into favour in recent years, while those who do not care to wield a pen may see how to get the best results from writing-up labels, the latest idea in annotating a collection.

A number of additional illustrations of written-up pages and some ideas on frontispieces are also included for the first time.

Readers who may be curious as to which of the authors is responsible for a particular chapter are informed that, generally speaking, Mr. Rang is responsible for the sections dealing in detail with lettering and arrangement, while Mr. Phillips is the author of the more general chapters. The illustrations throughout are the work of Mr. Rang.

NATAL



1857-1909

A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE FRONTISPIECE FOR A NATAL COLLECTION
The head was hand-drawn from the first portrait issue.

CHAPTER I

DOING ONE'S STAMPS JUSTICE

THE rapid increase in the number of different stamps issued and the consequent almost compulsory adoption by collectors of some form of specialisation or limitation as soon as they have passed through the initiatory stages of the hobby, have led during the past few years to a very widespread use of blank loose-leaf albums for the housing of collections, and to a marked increase in the number of different types of blank albums available. While the novice is content with the printed albums with squared pages, or with those more substantial volumes which provide him with a definite space for every stamp, the question of arrangement presents no difficulties. In the beginner's album he merely has to find the correct page, and in the spaced album the right square, but in the blank album he is faced, not with "a perfect and absolute blank," but with a sheet on which is printed nothing but an ornamental border and a *quadrillé* background, i.e. a network of small squares of equal size covering the space in which the stamps are to be mounted.

Even the user of a printed album often wants to make small "side-line" collections, or special studies for which his main volume provides no place, and in such cases the blank album affords the necessary scope and freedom.

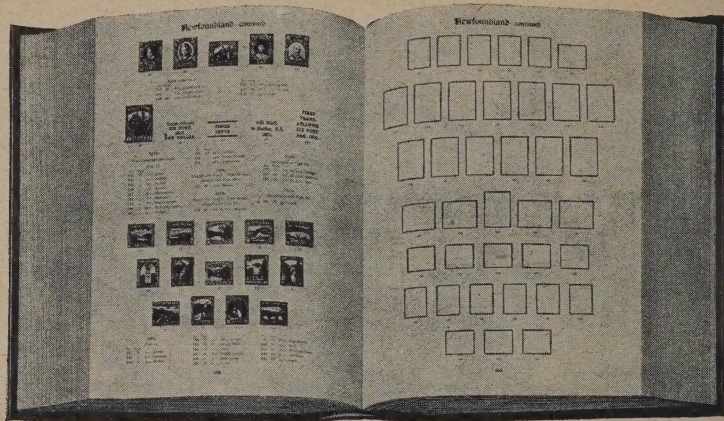
Obviously, the arrangement of a collection in a blank album calls for a certain measure of skill and judgment, if a satisfactory result is to be achieved, while the absence of any printed descriptions of the stamps throws upon the owner the onus of providing such descriptions, if the stamps are to tell their story.

A long experience has shown us that in this matter of housing their stamps, collectors of all classes and ages are singularly careless and neglectful. It is no unusual thing to see a collection worth many hundreds of pounds mounted up without any regard for neatness or symmetry, and with the roughest of illegible pencil notes as the only descriptive matter. Not that big collectors are alone in such neglectful treatment of what the philatelic journalist would call their "treasures." Smaller loose-leaf albums are similarly treated, and those who are keenest on the hobby are often the last to attempt to do any sort of justice to their stamps, once they have acquired them.

One can excuse the user of a printed album for overcrowding, as he has not the scope for rearrangement which the loose-leaf book affords, but even he is content to use a dirty, torn and dilapidated album long after its days of useful service are over. With the class of collector who starts in an album, continues in old exercise books and ends by throwing all his purchases into a hat-box or trunk, we have no concern, though a careful display in a penny exercise book would look better than many of the collections put haphazard into blank albums.

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It boils down to this. Are we merely hoarders, or are we intelligent collectors? Are we to take the line of least resistance—the path of laziness—and arrange our collections just anyhow, so that they are an eyesore to ourselves and a source of shame when we are asked to display them to friends, as we are frequently requested to do in these days when there is such a rapidly growing curiosity about our hobby, or are we,



A TYPICAL PRINTED ALBUM, THE GIBBONS "NEW IMPERIAL," IN WHICH A SPACE IS PROVIDED FOR EACH STAMP, WITH A CATALOGUE ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE.

at the cost of a small outlay of cash, time and trouble, to become the owners of attractively arranged stamp displays, which will fill us with pride whenever we look at them, and will give real pleasure to our friends and perhaps tempt them to take up the hobby themselves!

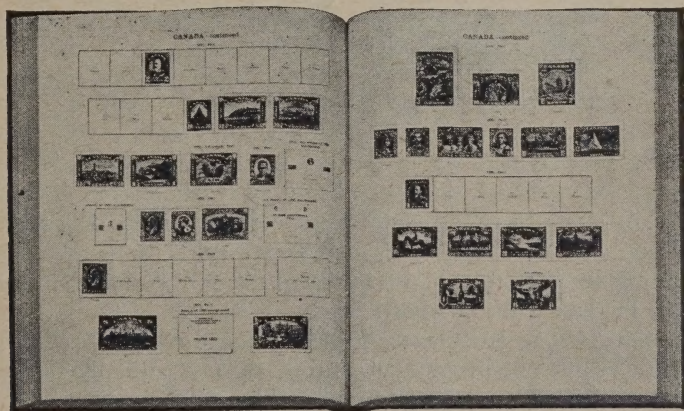
If we had a friendly dog, we should keep him in a decent kennel and give it a coat of paint occasionally. To a keen collector, stamps, if not pets, are at least friends, and yet we treat them as if they were so much rubbish, displaying them, if at all, then to the least possible advantage. If nothing else, this is false economy of time and of the very reasonable sum for which a reliable loose-leaf album can now be obtained. A poorly kept collection is a collection in which the stamps are continually exposed to damage and deterioration. When we come to sell it, we must not expect the dealer to pay us for pretty writing-up, but no dealer can remain uninfluenced in his assessment of values by neat and careful arrangement. He will also bear in mind that remounting of a collection will involve him in expense for labour, whereas he can price up a properly made collection at once and save himself or his staff valuable time. Again, an album with the stamps in their proper order and with the details clearly noted, will ensure that nothing is missed when a valuation is made, whereas the most careful buyer, when

faced with a haphazard potpourri of assorted issues, is bound to miss something, though there are supermen who miss very little.

Thus from every point of view it pays the collector to arrange his stamps properly. He will increase his own self-respect and his pride and joy in his collection. He will add to the pleasure of his friends, who will appreciate that stamps are worthy of attention if they obviously receive that attention from their owner. Lastly, he will ensure that justice is done to them when they are finally to leave his possession. Yet how few realise these facts, or, if they do realise them, how very few act upon their knowledge.

There are, however, hopeful signs that the era of "muddling along" is passing. The admirable work of the Junior Philatelic Society and of other philatelic societies and stamp clubs in training the younger generation in the proper handling of stamps is already bearing fruit. Perhaps the training of the older collectors would be hastened if the committees of international and other philatelic exhibitions refused to accept any badly arranged collections for display, and if those gentlemen who like to tell unpalatable home-truths made freer use of their tongues on this subject when careless displays are presented at local society meetings.

At any rate this book is a testimony to the present demand for helpful hints on the subject of the arrangement and writing-up of collections; for it is written in response to a steady stream of requests which have been received for a work which will give guidance in the matter. We can only hope that, in a modest way, it will fill the bill, for it is certain that collectors will not gain the maximum pleasure from their hobby until they have learned to appreciate the advantages of proper mounting and writing-up.



THE GIBBONS "NEW IDEAL" ALBUM IN WHICH EACH SQUARE CONTAINS AN ILLUSTRATION OR A DESCRIPTION OF THE STAMP IT IS TO RECEIVE.

CHAPTER II

THE CHOICE OF A LOOSE-LEAF ALBUM

THERE are innumerable loose-leaf principles in use in the world of commerce and many of these have been adapted to the manufacture of stamp albums, for which some of them are quite unsuited. Roughly speaking, loose-leaf stamp albums may be divided into three types—those in which the leaves are held by a spring-back binder, those in which they are threaded on pegs, and those in which some form of mechanism interlocks with the top or bottom edge of the leaves.

Whichever type is chosen, my advice is to avoid, as you would the plague, albums whose sole recommendation is cheapness. I have had over twenty years' close association with the manufacture of blank loose-leaf albums and I am convinced that under present conditions the prices quoted by the leading British album-makers are the lowest possible, consistent with the standard of quality which the purchaser has the right to expect. There are, it is true, cheaper albums on the market, usually of foreign



A SPRING-BACK ALBUM OPENED OUT TO ADMIT THE LEAVES

production, and these may deceive the unwary, but after a comparatively short period of use the springs or mechanism begin to break away, the bloom goes off the cover, and the whole album looks shoddy and dilapidated even if it does not actually fall to pieces. A good British album will give you service for a lifetime, if properly handled, outlasting three or four of its foreign imitations, so that, in this case, as in so many others, the best is the cheapest.

Nor is the best beyond your reach, for first-class quality is the hall-mark of even the cheapest albums put out by reputable firms, though naturally the less expensive ones do not have all the advantages of the highly priced *albums de luxe*. Still, even in the matter of appearance, I advise getting the best album your funds will run to, bearing in mind, of course, that as your collection expands you will have to add to the series. That you are reading this book proves that you aim to do justice to yourself and your stamps, and I am certain you will never regret adopting an album that has a touch of the

luxurious about it—leather back and corners for example, instead of cloth—even if you feel that you are being just a little bit extravagant.

Now for the leaves, which are in many ways even more important than the cover. There are two main classes of leaves—those made in one piece and with the edges “fluted” (i.e. ridged) so that the springs of the spring-back cover can grip them firmly, and those which have a double linen hinge at the side where the leaf is gripped by the cover. The latter have the advantage of lying absolutely flat when the album is opened, and I strongly advise buying an album with this type of leaf if funds will run to it. The extra cost is not great, while the advantages are incalculable.

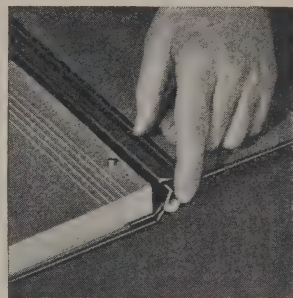
There is a third type of leaf which I mention only by way of warning, the sort which is of paper which has not the fluting for the spring cover to grip. Unfluted leaves are the hall-mark of cheapness and are an unmitigated nuisance, as they tend to jump out of the cover when the album is handled and cause damage to both stamps and temper.

Of course, there are nearly as many kinds of leaves as there are kinds of paper, or card (for many of the better-class albums have leaves of card or card-paper). The fallacious popular belief that paper with a shiny surface is better than that which is not shiny has forced manufacturers to adopt such a paper for some of the lower-priced albums, but if you want to write your notes in ink, it is better to pay a little more and have a paper with a really suitable writing surface. There is also a prejudice in favour of hand-made paper in the best classes of albums, but this, though it has no very serious drawbacks and has advantages which will be referred to later, is not so easy to handle in the manufacture of leaves as is the machine-made paper, owing to the fact that it varies in thickness, and leaves of hand-made paper are therefore liable to vary slightly in size and thickness.

At any rate, choose a leaf with a good writing surface, free from spots as far as possible, and of the best quality you can afford.

After you have studied the paper, look at the *quadrillé* ruling. This should not be so prominent as to spoil the appearance of the page when stamps are mounted on it, but as it is to guide you in placing your stamps, it should be easily visible without eye-strain, by both natural and artificial light. It will be a convenience if the centre of the page is indicated by a thickening of the *quadrillé* ruling, and the central vertical and horizontal lines should also be indicated where they touch the outer margins.

The border design of the leaf may be considered according to your own personal taste. Some very fine albums have no border at all, and it is just a matter of individual preference as to which you select. Try to imagine what the page will look like when filled with stamps.



THE SIMPLE MECHANISM OF THE
“PEG” SYSTEM

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As regards the mechanism of loose-leaf albums, the simplest are the best, and the tendency in all types is towards simplification. Pegs give great rigidity and security, but leaves can usually be released more quickly from albums which hold them by projections engaging in slots, or by similar contrivances. Avoid albums in which the leaves are threaded on rings. They are clumsy and unsuitable for stamp work, as far as my experience goes. So too are a number of other freak methods of attachment, however useful they may be for commercial purposes.



THE "V-SLOT" MECHANISM. UNEQUALLED FOR NEATNESS AND EASY WORKING

In the albums published by Messrs. Stanley Gibbons Ltd. four methods are employed.

(a) The "Spring-back" in which the leaves are gripped by springs concealed in the binding.

(b) The "Peg" system, in which the leaves are simply threaded on pegs. A sliding bar holds the binding and the leaves in position.

(c) The "telescopic peg" system used in the "Orilex" and "Stangib" albums, in which solid pegs fit into hollow ones. In this type the leaves do not have to be unthreaded from the pegs to release one in the centre of the album, as they all remain threaded either on the solid or the hollow pegs.

(d) The "Facile" fitting, in which very easily released "V-shaped" projections engage with similar slots in the linen hinge of the leaves.

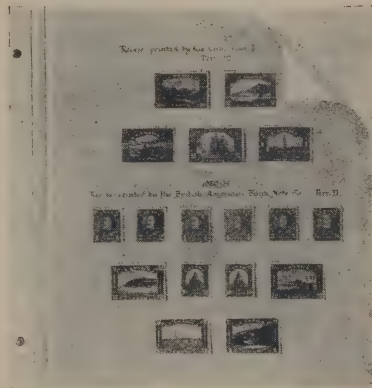
The protection of stamps is an important consideration, particularly if they are of the delicately surfaced "chalky" type. In a spring-back album it is best to interleave the pages which bear the stamps with sheets of smooth transparent paper which the makers will supply at a very low cost.

In the better albums there are three additional alternatives. The leaves may be had with tissue paper attached to their backs, so that the back of one leaf protects the stamps on that which follows it. Another pattern has a sheet of transparent paper attached to the inner edge. As this moves with the stamps, it gives the maximum protection, but is rather liable to crease and become unsightly, whereas the tissue backing of the other type is stuck down at all four edges. There is sometimes a little rubbing with the "backed" leaves, but taking everything into account, there is not much to choose between the two types.

The third pattern, not much used, has a stiff edge framing the leaf proper, and under this is slipped a "glassine" protection sheet. This looks very neat and gives adequate protection, but it is a nuisance to take in and out when stamps have to be moved, and is also apt to show finger-marks, which are very difficult to remove.

When you have your album, treat it properly if you wish it to give you proper service. Most spring-back albums will hold a larger number of leaves than is supplied with them, but if you put too many in you weaken the grip of the springs and eventually the metal gets tired and is apt to snap. In any case, an overfilled album is always liable to disgorge its leaves directly you open it, or, worse still, while you are carrying it, with consequent damage to your stamps. Albums with pegs or other mechanisms will refuse to close if you overload them, but it is unwise to try even these to the limit.

Finally, do not use, in any loose-leaf album, leaves which were not intended for it. How often one sees old covers, bought second-hand at some philatelic junk-shop, filled to bursting with leaves which obviously do not belong to them. The best one can say is that a collection thus housed is worthy of its owner, and provides an unmistakable index to his character.



EXAMPLE OF LEAF WITH TRANSPARENT INTERLEAVING ATTACHED TO THE INNER EDGE.

CHAPTER III

HOW TO HINGE STAMPS

IN view of the present insistence on perfect condition in even the commonest or most modern stamps, it is essential that they should be attached to the album in a manner which will expose them to the least possible deterioration.

Perhaps I may venture to say here that the condition craze is about the silliest fad that ever afflicted a presumably sane body of people. I am all for having stamps that look nice in the album. I would eschew those which bear disfiguring heavy postmarks, or which lack a corner or a margin, merely because they look unsightly, but I would not, as some do, refuse stamps that have a very slight thinning or that lack a solitary perf. or a fraction of their gum, nor would I leave a gap in my collection because a certain stamp did not exist in the ideal condition which I had made my standard.

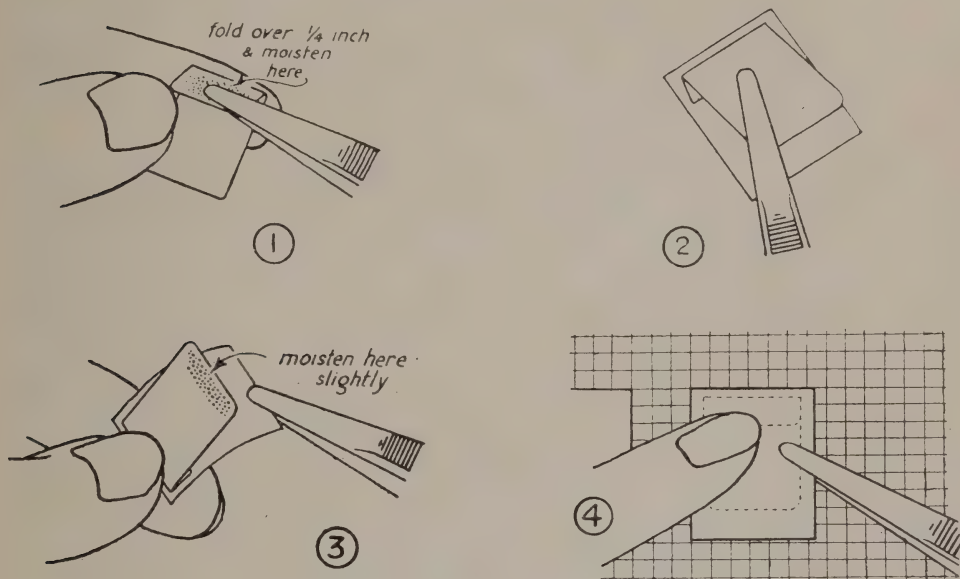
It is all very well for rich collectors to insist on the finest possible condition for every stamp they buy. To acquire the superfine is the privilege of wealth: but if thousands of collectors of more modest means attempt to ape their richer brethren and to insist on the same high standard of condition, they render the hobby much more expensive. It is no fault of the dealer, but if collectors refuse to buy two-thirds of the existing specimens of a certain stamp on account of their condition, they must obviously pay him three times as much for the remainder. Fortunately there are still many collectors content with the much more plentiful "average" specimens, which, even if not centred with microscopic accuracy, or postmarked symmetrically, are not ugly or undesirable, and there are signs that the condition craze is working its own doom, at least so far as the general body of collectors is concerned.

However this may be, it is obviously desirable not to copy the ways of our forefathers, who used gum or even glue to fix their stamps to the album pages, or who paid tribute to the permanently adhesive qualities of "stamp-edging" by utilising that instead, for their stamps were often ruined by these methods. There is no excuse for false economy of this kind now, as gummed hinges can be obtained for a few pence per thousand—but there are hinges *and* hinges. As in the case of albums, the true economy here is to have the best, and even the best are within the reach of everyone. There comes a time when the stamp has to be moved from its place in the album and (less often perhaps) when the hinge has to be taken off the stamp. It is thus important that the hinge should be peelable, i.e. that it should be possible to strip it off stamp or album page without damage to either. The best hinges *are* peelable, but *only when the gum is thoroughly dry*. If you put a stamp in the wrong place on the album page, avoid giving way to the natural tendency to correct the error at once. Leave the stamp where it is for an hour or two till the gum is thoroughly dry and then, if the hinge is truly peelable, it can be removed without damage to the album page: but if an attempt is

made to shift the hinge when moist, the album page will be marked or damaged, or the gum of the stamp will be removed.

Before considering the best method of hinging a stamp, let us think for a moment of what will happen to the stamp during its lifetime in collections, and we shall see that it must be mounted in such a way that

- (a) the hinge can be removed from the stamp with as little damage to the paper and gum of the latter as possible ;



- (b) the stamp can be easily removed from the album leaving the page unmarked ;
 (c) the stamp can be turned over freely so that the back or watermark can be examined without bending it or its perforations in any way ;
 (d) the hinge is not visible when the stamp is in its place in the album.

The use of doubly-gummed peelable hinges of good quality will enable us to fulfil conditions (a) and (b), but to satisfy the remaining requirements we must make sure that we apply the hinge to the stamp and to the album page in the proper manner.

In order that the stamp may be handled as little as possible many collectors, and especially those whose hands perspire easily, make use of specially made tweezers, which any stamp dealer can supply for a shilling or two. They should be of non-rusting metal so that they can be used for soaking stamps if necessary, and many philatelists prefer that they should have slightly "milled" points. Avoid tweezers with very sharp points or edges as they may damage the stamp.

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Using the tweezers, the best way to hinge stamps is as shown in the accompanying illustrations, and in accordance with the following description. (The fingers can, of course, be used if preferred, but it is quite easy to acquire the necessary knack with the tweezers.)

1. Holding the hinge with gummed side downward between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, fold about a third of its length with the tweezers, and press the crease down with the thumb.
2. With the stamp face downward on the table (and don't forget to see that the top is uppermost, as there is nothing more annoying than to find that you have put the hinge on upside-down), place the moistened portion at the top of the stamp within a fraction of an inch of the edge and clear of the perforations, taking care that the hinge is in a central position so that no part of it projects beyond the sides.
3. Hold the stamp with the tweezers and with the fingers bend it slightly, so that the free end of the hinge stands away from the stamp. The bottom of the hinge can then be slightly touched with the tongue without danger of moistening the stamp at the same time.
4. Hold both the stamp and the hinge with the tweezers—towards the top to avoid the moistened gum—and place in position on the album page. By holding the hinge against the stamp one prevents it from sticking to the page before the desired position is reached.

It is particularly important to moisten only the lower end of the free part of the hinge, so that when mounted in the album the stamp can be turned back without creasing the top perforations. If the whole hinge is stuck to the page, it is impossible to turn up the stamp without damage and there is more likelihood of damaging the album when the stamp is removed.

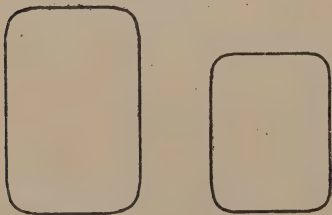
It will be seen that Rule 2 cannot be observed if the hinge is as large as, or larger than, the stamp. It is not necessary to have very large hinges for large stamps as a

hinge of normal size will hold them quite firmly, but smaller hinges will be required for small stamps such as those of pre-war Russia. The two sizes here illustrated should suffice for all ordinary purposes.

Another important consideration is the amount of moisture to be applied to the hinge. This should be as little as possible, consistent with the hinge sticking properly. A very wet hinge is bound to deteriorate the stamp or mess the album page, and

the less gum the tongue removes the more often the hinge can be used.

If you are the owner of a very moist tongue or have a large number of stamps to hinge, you will find the little gadget called a mount-damper a useful aid. This is made like a miniature fountain-pen, but the place of the nib is taken by a small "brush" of cotton. The damper is thoroughly soaked in water when first purchased and thence-



forward is filled with water like a fountain-pen, as required. A touch with the moistened brush will obviate the use of the tongue and will avoid the unpleasant dryness of mouth which sometimes comes from a long spell of hinge-licking.

If you decide not to use tweezers for hinging your stamps you can bend over a single hinge, or if preferred several at a time, by taking them between the right-hand finger and thumb, gummed side upward, and with the length to be turned over projecting. A simple turn of the hand and pressure of the projecting short end on a flat surface will suffice to bend them over, when the ordinary procedure of moistening and attaching can be followed.

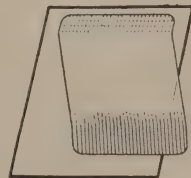
When mounting pairs or blocks of four it is open to question whether the procedure adopted by some collectors of attaching the hinge to one stamp only, or in the case of blocks, in the centre, and close to the upper edge, of the upper pair of stamps, is wise.

The object of attaching the hinge to one stamp only is to avoid possible damage to the gum of two stamps. Placing the hinge at the top of a block of four certainly enables the back of the stamps to be examined easily, but in the case of both blocks and pairs the methods described leave the stamps insecurely attached to the page, and when the leaves are turned it too often happens that the stamps turn up or over of themselves and get badly creased. If proper, peelable hinges are used, the risk of deterioration of the stamps is very slight and pairs should, in my opinion, be hinged in the centre and close to the top edge as in the case of single stamps, while on blocks the smaller portion of the hinge should be attached to the lower portion of the two upper stamps, so that the stamps are firmly held.

Of course, the doubling of the hinges adds considerably to the bulk of a well-filled album, and to overcome this drawback a hinge has been produced, known as the "Continental" pattern, which has a small portion of one end gummed on the front and a similar part of the other end gummed on the back. It is thus only necessary to moisten the former for attachment to the stamp and the latter for sticking the stamp in the album. These hinges are now becoming very popular and they are certainly convenient to use.

There is one method of placing stamps in the album which has achieved a certain popularity of late as it enables the collector to avoid any risk of damaging his stamps by affixing hinges to them—I refer to the use of "pochettes," little envelopes of transparent material in which the stamps are placed—the hinge being attached to the envelope instead of to the stamp.

There are, no doubt, numerous makes of these "pochettes" and those who decide to use them should be careful to select a kind which does not "sweat" grease when in a hot atmosphere or under pressure, as considerable damage has been done to stamps in this way in the past. Another source of trouble is the tendency of the paper used for some kinds to shrink or cockle

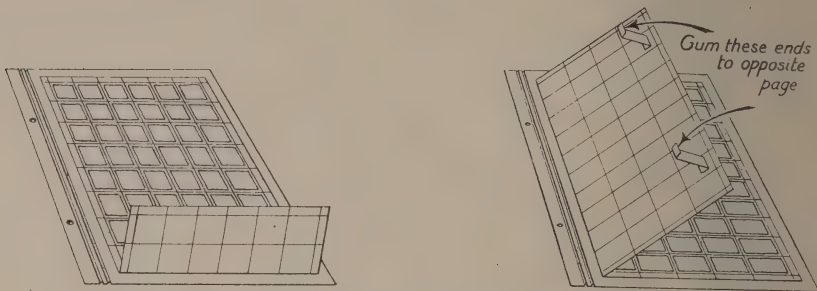


THE "CONTINENTAL"
HINGE

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after a time. I have seen stamps badly creased, and pairs of stamps almost severed, owing to the use of pockets which curled up or shrank. Whatever type of container is used, it is advisable to have a container always a little larger than the stamp or stamps which are to go in it.

The avoidance of damage by the use of "pochettes" is largely illusory. It is true that the stamps do not have to be hinged and that the gum therefore remains



HOW TO MOUNT SHEETS LARGER THAN ALBUM PAGE

immaculate, but it is a very difficult task to insert a stamp into a "pochette" of anywhere near its own size without causing damage to the perforation teeth. Any close examination of the backs of stamps is practically impossible when they are mounted on this system, as many exhibitors at Continental stamp shows, whose treasures would not stand too close a scrutiny, found to their delight. The judges could not take each stamp out of its casing for examination, so to-day the general use of "pochettes" is banned by the regulations of most international philatelic exhibitions.

There is a method of avoiding a too frequent re-hinging of your stamps which may usefully be adopted, at any rate in the case of rarities. This consists in hinging them in the ordinary way and mounting them on a piece of card or paper, which, in its turn, is hinged to the album page. Black paper forms a good background to enhance the brilliance of many stamps, but it is best to use it only for emphasis. Also it must be remembered that the extra thickness of the paper or card is going to increase the bulk of your album very quickly if this method is freely used.

To protect the surface of particularly delicate specimens, or the embossing of such stamps as British octagonals or early Gambias, cards with a sunk centre may be used, or little strips of card may be attached to the page to form a frame to take the pressure. It must be remembered, however, that extra thickness on one page means extra pressure in the same spot on adjacent pages, which may cause damage to stamps placed there.

It is always as well to avoid subjecting your stamps to any unnecessary pressure, and this can best be done by keeping your albums on edge on shelves, and not too closely jammed together.

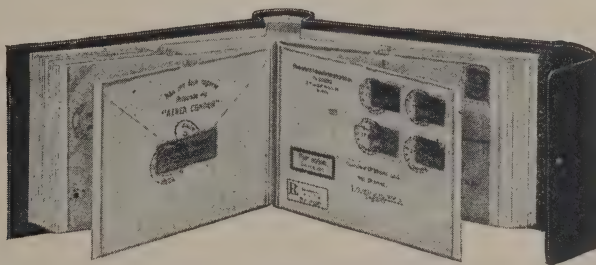
No satisfactory way of attaching small sheets or large blocks seems to have been found other than using a number of hinges placed at all the strategic positions. This unfortunately prevents the stamps from being turned over for inspection, but if the watermark or other points of interest appearing on the back are written on the album page the necessity of turning the block over will seldom arise and this method will in consequence meet most requirements.

Sheets larger than the album page offer a different problem and folding over of the more or less large overlap is hardly avoidable, the remainder of the sheet being held by hinges. This will be found quite satisfactory so long as not more than one or two rows of stamps are folded over, but with larger sheets it may be necessary to secure the overlap by some means to prevent it becoming creased. This may be done by turning the sheet so that the fold runs parallel and close to the centre of the album; the right-hand side of the sheet being held down by hinges, the overlapping part should then be fastened to the back of the opposite page by means of short strips of thin paper folded concertina fashion as shown in the illustration.

Care should be taken to make the strips just long enough so that when fully extended by the opening of the album, they will hold the sheet down without pulling it. In this way the sheet will open out and close with the album without fear of it flapping.

For stamps larger than the opened album, separate accommodation will have to be found, as it is not advisable to have double folds subjected to the pressure of the album on account of the danger of breaking the perforations.

For envelopes or cards, which often find a place in modern collections, hinges of the usual type are not suitable. If the back of the envelope is not of importance,



AN ALBUM DESIGNED FOR COVERS ONLY

gummed paper such as is used for mending music can be converted into super-hinges, but the little gummed "corners," which have come into wide use since air-covers became fashionable, provide a secure grip. These are attached to the album page at suitable distances and the corners of the envelope are tucked into them. The best type is made of transparent cellophane, so that the corners are practically invisible.

For collections consisting entirely of envelopes and cards (e.g. many modern air-post collections), albums are now made with leaves consisting of transparent envelopes, which allow both the front and back of their contents to be seen.

CHAPTER IV

PREPARING STAMPS FOR THE ALBUM

PERHAPS a word about the preparation of stamps before mounting them in a collection will not be out of place here.

It is an axiom that, unless of great rarity, a damaged, very heavily postmarked, or otherwise unsightly specimen should not find a place in the album, and it is essential for appearance sake, that paper, hinges, etc., adhering to the backs of stamps, should be removed before they are mounted. (There are, of course, occasions when, though the whole cover is not required, it is necessary to include a portion of the envelope as well as the stamp, in order to show a postmark or other feature, in which case the paper should be trimmed to a neat rectangle, clear of the stamp and whatever else it is desired to show. Do *not* cut closely round the stamp and postmark to make the resulting piece of paper a fantastic shape.)

There are certain things which it is permissible to do to a stamp in order to improve its appearance. You may give it a good bath in hot or cold water, after first assuring yourself that its colours are "fast." Stamps printed on "chalky" papers or in aniline and certain other colours which experience will tell you, do not like water, and will be ruined if introduced to it.

A creased stamp may be improved by the use of a hot flat-iron and damp blotting-paper, if the colours are fast. The flat-iron and clean dry blotting-paper will serve to remove grease spots, while a very cautious application of peroxide of hydrogen to the surface will cause stamps whose colours have been changed by oxidation to revert to their pristine hues. (Early stamps printed in red or orange and some blues are particularly susceptible to this change, turning to brown or black in many cases.) The peroxide should be applied with a clean camel-hair brush over the whole surface of the stamp. If applied only to portions of the stamp, patches will result.

To remove stamps from adherent paper, the hot-bath is again needed, but with the same proviso that only those printed in fast colours may be so treated. Stamps whose colours are fugitive call for other methods. They may be floated face upwards on water and removed when the paper from which it is desired to rid them is soaked, but before the stamps themselves have come to harm. If preferred, stamps may be placed face upward on damp blotting-paper and the process watched with equal care.

A handy home-made "gadget" consists of a shallow tin nearly filled with a pad of blotting-paper, which can be damped as required.

A wet camel-hair brush, used with discretion, may be found helpful in removing portions of ancient hinges from the backs of unused stamps whose gum it is desired to preserve, but most hinges can be removed without moisture with a little coaxing. To remove hinges from used stamps, treat them in the same way as for the detachment of any other superfluous paper.

With our stamps prepared for the places they are to adorn, we may proceed to consider how they are to be arranged to the best advantage, but before we discuss the blank album, may be remind the collector who uses printed albums that great care should be taken to put stamps into their squares, level. This should be easy, but how many albums does one see absolutely spoilt, so far as appearance is concerned, by irregular alignment of the stamps. Another cause of poor appearance is the placing of odd stamps in the margins of the pages.

CHAPTER V

STAMPS VERSUS WRITING-UP

THE great problem which faces the collector who is about to arrange his stamps in a blank album is the extent to which he should describe them in writing. It is obvious that some description is necessary, or the collection will convey nothing to those who inspect it, and may even cause confusion to its owner. On the other hand, the collection is presumably to be a collection of stamps, not a history book, or a display of its owner's artistic capabilities. The safe rule therefore is that writing-up should be reduced to the absolute minimum consistent with its expressing the intention of the collection, and that decorative effects should be confined to such as are necessary to enhance the appearance of the stamps or to emphasise the presence of special items.

I have seen collections arranged by persons of obvious artistic ability, and the pages, with their scrolled frames to the stamps, their ornate borders, and, in some cases, even large pictorial designs, looked very attractive; but my eye was drawn to the artwork and I could not concentrate on the stamps. The stamps were merely an excuse for the draughtsmanship, instead of the latter being subordinated to the former.

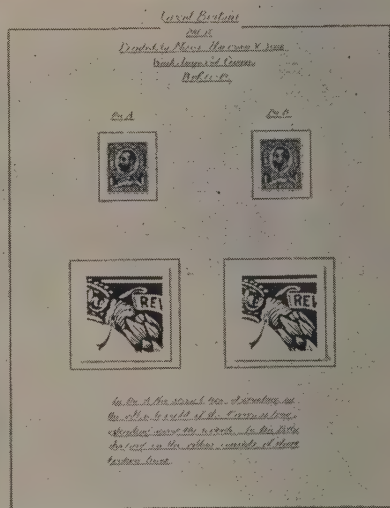
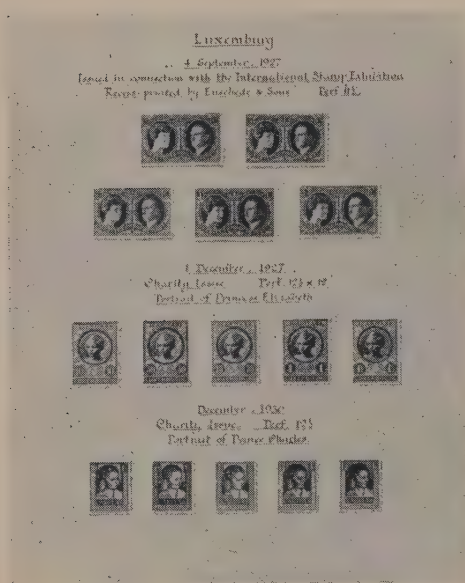
I feel very strongly that, apart from such written descriptions as may be necessary, the only decoration that is really allowable is the occasional use of a neat frame-line to draw attention to a particularly important specimen, and that absolute simplicity is the height of refinement.

Emphasis is also obtainable by the use of little paper arrows which can be attached to the page to indicate a rare or particularly interesting item. They can also be

20 HOW TO ARRANGE AND WRITE-UP A STAMP COLLECTION

employed to point out the position of flaws or other variations in the design, but whatever they are used for, do not overdo the practice. A collection in which every stamp catalogued at over half a crown, or every specimen showing a dot or speck, has its attendant arrow, becomes simply a laughing-stock. Once again, we are arranging a stamp collection, not attending an archery meet.

Colour should be used very sparingly. Red ink is perhaps the least objectionable,



TYPICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF GENERAL AND SPECIALISED COLLECTIONS

and can be used for underlining, for initials, or in places where a certain modest emphasis is required. Gold is useful for putting frame-lines on black paper or card, if special stamps are mounted thus, but it should be used very sparingly. Crude inks, such as violet or green, are sure to clash with the colours of your stamps, and in any case are an eyesore.

Let your aim be to have a collection which does not allow the beholder to miss its strong points, and yet has the good manners not to shout them blatantly at him.

As regards the extent of your actual descriptive writing-up, you must be guided by your intention in forming the collection. For a collection arranged according to a particular catalogue, it will probably be enough to include the name of the country, the date of the issue, its watermark, perforation, etc., but so long as your writing-up does not overweight the page, there is no harm in adding details as to printers, designers, etc.,

while I am inclined to favour the inclusion of very brief descriptions of the designs of the stamps, below each, where they are of interest, as such descriptions attract people who may not understand the attention you pay to purely philatelic details.

In collections which deal purely with the stories told by individual stamps—zoological, historical, or other similar displays—the descriptive matter must be very carefully selected. You will soon tire your friends if to each bird or beast you append the full story of its life or habits. Give its name and habitat, but not much more. The same remark applies to stamp pictures of persons or places. If you really know your stamps you can always supplement the written descriptions verbally, and this method will be much more attractive to those examining the collection.

In some cases it may be advisable to write the descriptions of all the stamps together below the set, particularly where the descriptions are too long to go easily beneath the individual stamps. Such a course should be avoided wherever possible, as reference to the descriptions is more difficult where they are not close to the stamps to which they apply.

In highly specialised collections, particularly in those which are formed to show the result of a particular line of research, the owner must be allowed to explain the various stages of his study by rather copious notes, but even in such cases the writing-up should be confined to the minimum necessary for that purpose. In this connection enlarged sketches of particular details are often very helpful, though their production is not within the capacity of all of us. An enlarged photograph of a stamp or a portion of it may be used as a substitute, the important details being emphasised, if necessary, in ink.

Apart from such enlarged sketches, designs of an artistic character may be regarded as permissible when they serve as title-pages to an album or country, while sketch maps, either in black or colours, can also be included. These latter are particularly useful in air-mail collections for indicating mail routes or the course of famous flights.

To sum up, the following general rules should be followed :

(1) Do not use decoration or colour to such an extent that they are no longer subsidiary to the stamps.

(2) Do not include more written description than is absolutely necessary to explain your stamps, having regard to the purpose for which the particular collection is formed.

CHAPTER VI

THE WRITER'S OUTFIT

BEFORE attempting to set about the actual writing-up it is of first importance to obtain all the necessary paraphernalia, in order to have whatever ink or pen is required at hand when it is wanted. Nothing disturbs the regularity of the writing more than having to hunt or call upon the household for an urgently required blotter or eraser.

A separate chapter deals with inks for black leaves. For white leaves at least two kinds of ink are necessary : indian ink and ticket ink. The kind to use will depend on the work to be done. For sketches, frame-lines, arrows, etc., a good indian ink is the best and is also good for block lettering or any lettering in which there are no very fine upstrokes. A few makers sell it in concentrated form which gives a beautiful dense and glossy black impression ; but for copperplate or any lettering containing hair-line strokes indian ink will be found too thick and a more fluid kind will have to be used. Well-stocked colourmen will supply what they call " ticket ink," which is very suitable as it is as nearly black as no matter and " covers " well. I would recommend those who are unable to obtain this latter kind to sacrifice the blackness and use ordinary blue-black ink rather than indian for " fine " writing. Get the darkest possible, and if it is allowed to dry without blotting, it will be found that after a few weeks it will be so near to black as not to clash with the variegated colours of the stamps.

So much of the sharpness of the lettering depends on the ink that I would advise trying several makes until the most suitable is found. In my own experience I have found no advantage to be derived from using a waterproof ink ; a collection is not likely to be exposed to the rain, so that a fixed ink is not really a necessity. On the contrary, an ordinary ink can be diluted with water if found too thick, a mixture not always successful when chemicals have been added to render it insoluble.



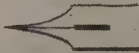
These two inks are the only ones required for actual writing, but, if the lettering is to be underlined or frames made to enclose particular stamps or to surround a page, a plain red ink should be added to the outfit.

The articles next in order, but of no less importance, are the pens.

For the work which will confront the average stamp collector only two types need be considered, although there is a third, to which I shall refer later, which is so useful that it well repays inclusion in the list.

The first and most commonly known type of nib is the pointed one, which makes a line of varying thickness, depending on the pressure applied. I would advise having three sizes of this type. The largest, the average office nib, preferably with turned-up point, used with indian ink, will be suitable for any lettering requiring no fineness, such as block lettering or other styles referred to as " printing."

For the smaller sizes a little more discrimination is needed as these pens will be required almost exclusively for copper-plate writing in which fineness of the upstrokes and even thickness of the downstrokes are equally necessary. Particularly suitable are those made by Messrs. Joseph Gillott and numbered 170 and 303. The larger of the two should be reserved for headings while the smaller will serve for all the smaller

<i>Styles of lettering :-</i>	<i>Pens:-</i>
<i>Roundhand</i>	
<i>Block Roundhand</i>	
<i>Roundhand Italics</i>	
BLOCK LETTERING	
<i>Copper-plate</i>	
<i>Italics</i>	

STYLES OF WRITING SUITABLE FOR STAMP COLLECTIONS AND THE CORRESPONDING
TYPES OF PEN THAT SHOULD BE USED

lettering. To obtain good results it is essential to use them only with the ticket ink and not with indian ink.

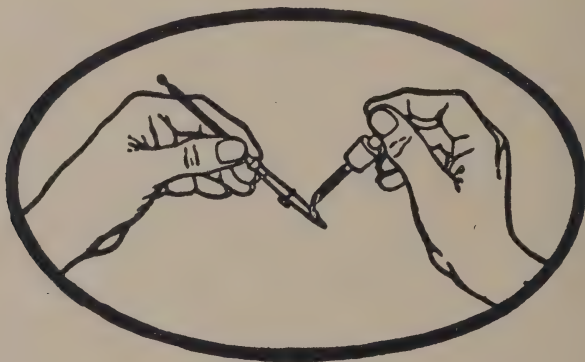
For sketches, any one of the pens on page 25 will be suitable, the size to be used depending on the fineness of the work.

The second type of pen, for roundhand, Gothic, and Old English writing, differs from the first in having its business end cut off square so that it draws a fine line only in a lateral direction ; with an upward or downward movement and without pressure a thick line is obtained equal to the width of the pen. It is a feature of such pens that no pressure should ever be used so that the thick strokes always remain constant for a given direction. They are made in a number of sizes, depending on the width of the writing edge. The size to use is determined by the size of the writing required ; this should be approximately a fifth of the height of the small letters. In other words a

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nib will produce in graceful proportions a letter equal in height to five times the width of its writing edge. These pens are also obtainable from Messrs. Gillott, under No. 5005, and sold in cards of assorted sizes from 1 to 6. Nos. 5 or $5\frac{1}{2}$ will be found the most suitable for the general description of a collection, while Nos. $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 produce good-sized letters for headings. Another good range are the "Rex" pens made by William Mitchell. Of course, personal taste and practice will determine the sizes to be selected, which, once adopted, should be retained throughout the work in order to maintain uniformity.

A kind of little clip is supplied with the above nibs which should be fastened to



A RULING PEN AND HOW TO FILL IT

Square pens with ink reservoir should be filled in the same way.

them when writing to act as an ink reservoir. See that the clip is about a sixteenth of an inch from the flexible end of the nib and does not press on it.

With these pens it is also advisable to use ticket ink, but, if a rather heavier style of writing is desired, indian ink can be used, on condition that the ink is placed into the reservoir—either with another pen or with the quill usually fixed into the cork of the bottle—and does not run down inside the pen.

The third type of pen, known to draughtsmen as a "ruling pen," is invaluable for underlining or for drawing frame-lines, and for any purpose when long or numerous even lines are required it is infinitely superior to an ordinary nib. It consists of two flat springy blades—not unlike a pair of tweezers—which can be brought close together by means of a milled-edge screw. The advantages of the pen are that any kind of ink can be used with good results, and that when the pen is set to a given width the line will remain of even thickness whatever may be its length. As with the square pens, the ink should be inserted between the blades, leaving the outside quite dry so that it can be placed against a ruler without fear of smearing.

The foregoing description, lengthy as it may seem on such hum-drum subjects as inks and pens, is still incomplete without one "wrinkle" as valuable as all the others put together.

Whatever pens you may use never let the ink dry on them. Keep a jar of water and a duster by you and after every few lines of writing, or before leaving the work, dip the pen in water and clean it. This little attention—which becomes quite automatic—will repay you tenfold in obtaining those fine hairlines and clean thick lines which are the essence of beautiful manuscript.

To sum up, I append the following list of the articles composing the "writer-up's" outfit, which will cost under 15s. and be sufficient for writing-up a number of volumes.

Indian ink.

Ticket ink.

Red ink.

Pointed pens :

(1) Office type.

(2) Gillott No. 170.

(3) „ No. 303.

Square pens :

Gillott No. 5005, sizes 1 to 6, or Mitchell's No. 0899-0905.

Ruling pen.

Gummed paper arrows.

Ruler.

Jar of water.

Duster.

Before studying the chapters on arrangement I would advise prospective writers to obtain the necessary outfit and make a few trials. Do not be downhearted if your first efforts are not crowned with success, for only practice makes perfect, and it is certain that anyone whose hand is not hopelessly shaky can produce satisfactory writing with a little perseverance.



THE TYPES OF PEN REQUIRED FOR WRITING-UP

CHAPTER VII

BLACK-LEAF ALBUMS

BLACK-LEAF Albums have come into great favour during the last few years. This is not surprising as the brilliance with which the colours of the stamps stand out against the dark background is comparable with that of fine gems as presented by jewellers against a background of a rich velvet.

It is possible that even more collectors would use such albums if writing upon black paper did not at first sight appear to present some difficulty. It is obvious that ordinary inks are quite useless, but if the proper materials are used, it is as easy to write on black paper as on the more usual white.

It is true that a few hints are necessary, as those who have tried white inks or water colours may have found out, but once these are given the rest is plain sailing.

Three methods of annotating black-leaf albums offer themselves to the collector's choice :

1. White pencil.
2. Pen and white "ink."
3. Gummed writing-up labels printed in white on black paper, which are the subject of another chapter.

Little need be said about white pencils. They stand in much the same relation to black albums as ordinary pencils do to white albums ; suitable perhaps for hasty notes but incapable of giving a really fine finish to a collection. Stamp collectors may, however, find them useful on account of their convenience. They are used in the same way as lead pencils, though, being generally softer, they need less pressure and more frequent sharpening. It is advisable to have a piece of sandpaper on which the exposed lead can be brought to a fine point without any flat side, to ensure strokes of even thickness.

The second method, which is by pen and white "ink," possesses the same scope, the same ease of writing and the same attractiveness of finish as have been ascribed in other chapters to ordinary black on white writing-up. The pens and the manner of formation of the lettering are the same ; only the medium differs.

There are several kinds of white on the market suitable for using with a pen. Chinese White and Process White are obtainable from all colourmen, usually in the form of a moist paste to which water must be added for use. Of the two, Process White is the better for our purpose as it is usually more finely ground. Various mixtures are sold under the name of White Ink differing from the pastes in that they are already thinned and supposedly ready to use. Messrs. Reeves & Sons Ltd. produce a water-proof White Ink which is quite good.



A PAGE FROM A "DESIGNS" COLLECTION

Attractive pages from black-leaf albums written-up with "process-white."



A STRAIGHTFORWARD COLLECTION OF OLD CLASSICS

28 HOW TO ARRANGE AND WRITE-UP A STAMP COLLECTION

It is most important for the satisfactory use of any of these Whites to understand how they differ in substance from the black or other coloured inks commonly used.

While most black or coloured inks are dyes in solution, all the Whites consist of an insoluble white pigment mixed with water and gum, or some other liquid. In ordinary inks the pen may be dipped in the pot with the assurance, as everyone knows, of always withdrawing properly mixed colour. With white inks the pigment always tends to settle at the bottom and consequently the pot-dipper finds that successive dips become more watery unless, in despair, he plunges his nib to the bottom only to pick up a lump of thick sediment.

The whole secret of using any white ink successfully is to keep the pigment thoroughly mixed with the liquid medium.

The procedure to be followed when about to do some writing-up should be this :

1. Get together a bottle of White and whichever pens have been selected. Also a small camel-hair brush, a duster, and a jar of water. Owing to the chemical action of hard water on the white pigment it is a worth-while precaution to use distilled water for dilution to avoid the possibility of the writing becoming oxidised in the course of years. Failing this, boiled or softened water is recommended in preference to tap water.

2. Mix the contents of the bottle of White very thoroughly with a stick until no lumps are left. (The end of the penholder will do, the white does not stain and can easily be wiped off.)

3. Take a few brushfuls of White on to a saucer or artist's china pan. Again mix well with the brush and thin out by adding water with the brush. Even the so-called ready-to-use mixtures are usually too thick for writing and need to be thinned in this way.

4. Apply the ink with the brush to both sides of an ordinary pen or under the clip if a reservoir pen is used, and you are ready for writing.

It is not vain repetition to say again that it is just as easy to write with white ink as with black. The difficulty sometimes encountered by beginners is in trying to write with ink not sufficiently diluted or properly mixed. It is best to add too much water at first and try the result. Do not be misled by the greyish appearance of the ink whilst wet. In drying, which will take five minutes or so, it will become whiter. If it is then still too grey, wipe the pen clean, add a little more White to the mixture on the saucer, mix well with the brush, and apply it to the pen and try again. The correct mixture should flow as perfectly as from a fountain-pen and dry a brilliant white.

White ink dries on the pen more rapidly than do ordinary inks and after every three or four words the mixture on the saucer should be stirred with the brush and applied to the pen, at the same time brushing the latter in order to mix the new supply with the old.

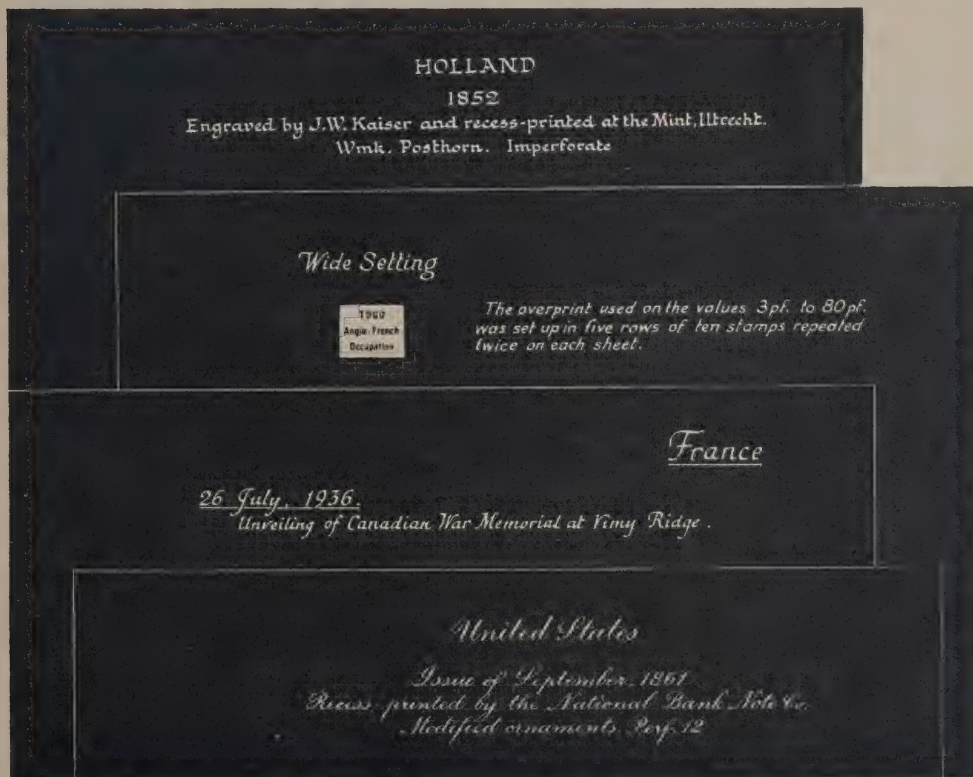
Never allow the pen to run half dry or there will be a difference in tone marking the place where the pen is replenished, which is particularly disfiguring when it happens

in the middle of a word. It is better to recharge the pen at frequent intervals to make sure of a regular flow.

Evaporation of the supply on the saucer is sometimes fairly rapid and should be remedied by occasional small additions of water to maintain the correct consistency.

From time to time the pen should be dipped in water and wiped off completely to avoid any undesirable thickening of the lettering due to the formation of little crusts around the point. The pen should of course be thoroughly cleaned before being put away.

As already stated the pens required and the formation of the letters are the same as for black ink. The advice concerning these, given in other chapters, applies in every respect to writing with white ink. It should be added, however, that in the choice of style of lettering one should be influenced by the fact that the white *quadrillé* generally



VARIOUS STYLES OF HEADING AND LETTERING DONE WITH PEN AND PROCESS-WHITE

appears rather more prominent on black leaves than the pale-tinted *quadrillé* does on white leaves.

For this reason it will probably be agreed by most collectors that on black paper the heavier styles of lettering look best. The delicate upstrokes of good copper-plate writing are apt to get lost in the *quadrillé* and the lettering to look spidery, although this disadvantage can be overcome by using a thicker pointed nib.

One final word of advice is that, whatever style of writing is used, the pages should always be interleaved to avoid the white ink rubbing off.

CHAPTER VIII

LETTERING

THE choice of the style of lettering the collector is going to adopt, be it black or white, should not be made without due consideration. The question of personal taste, which is not so very important, should be subordinated firstly to the talent of the writer, and secondly to the type of the collection which is to be arranged.

In a previous chapter were illustrated six different styles, belonging broadly to three groups: the first three styles produced by square pens, the next by a thick-pointed pen, and the last two by fine-pointed pens. Thus we have the choice of three groups.

If a little practice is carried out patiently with each type in turn, some idea will be obtained of one's ability to write with a particular pen in preference to the others. Those who have a good control of their fingers may find themselves successful with "copper-plate" or "roman italics" which require a firm yet delicate touch, whilst others who like to feel some guidance from the pen will prefer to use the less flexible roundhand type, producing thick and thin strokes automatically. For those who dare not trust themselves to do a sustained curve the plain block letters will commend themselves on account of their more staccato strokes.

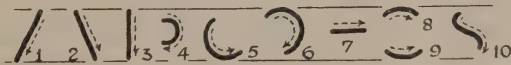
So much for the factor of personal ability, but some thought should also be given to the type of collection that is being written-up. The general guiding principle is that the greater the amount of writing, the less ornate it should be. If the subject is a general collection in which only main headings appear above each issue, with a few particulars occupying three or four lines at the most, Copper-plate or Roundhand Italics are more appropriate; but if the collection requires notes under many of the stamps it will be wise to choose a more compact style, like block lettering, so that more may be written within a small space.

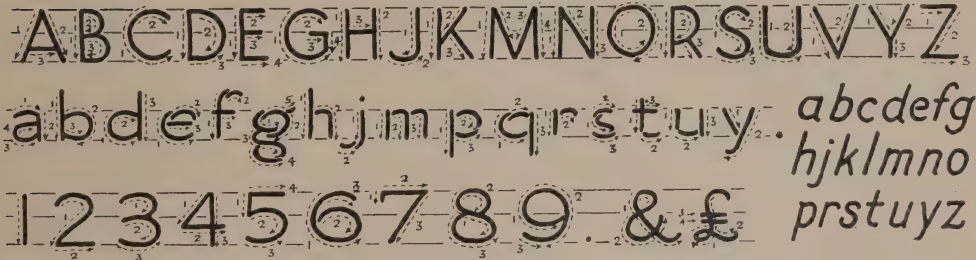
The simplest lettering style is block capitals, because all its elements are of uniform thickness. In order to master the necessary strokes it is well to practise lettering about

twice the size required in the collection. Use smooth paper, ruling three guide-lines $\frac{1}{4}$ in. apart for each line of lettering, and a pen of the office type with a good thick point. Maintain an even pressure on the pen and rest an instant at the finish of each stroke before lifting the pen, to ensure sharp terminals.

There are ten elemental strokes which, when combined one with another, will form every letter in the alphabet. Each elemental stroke must be carried through

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 123456
 789 *Wmk. Multiple Script & A. PERF. 15.*

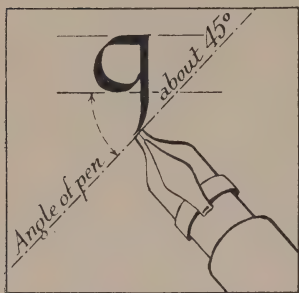
THE ELEMENTAL :- 



I. PLAIN BLOCK LETTERING

without stopping or lifting the pen and—what is also very important for perfect regularity—must be made always in the same direction. It will be seen from the sketch that this direction is downwards or sideways but never pushing up against the direction of the pen: this is a cardinal rule to observe in block and roundhand lettering. The rule does not apply to copper-plate style as this is a faster writing which depends for its gracefulness more on a supple swinging movement than on deliberate strokes.

Start with vertical strokes, then oblique strokes, after which try combinations such as E, F, H, I, N, M, Z, etc. When you can make the straight strokes uniformly go on to the circular exercises with a few half-circles first to the left and then to the right. Now combine the two, forming the letter O. Follow these with the other circular letters, C, D, G, S, etc., and you will have completed the entire alphabet as shown above.



HOW TO HOLD A ROUNDHAND PEN

The small letters and the numerals are based on the same principles and offer no greater difficulties.

If the pen produces ragged work, find out why. Is it the quality of the paper, the ink, or the pen? Remember that you cannot do clean work with a dirty pen, so clean it frequently. Going over strokes a second time usually clogs the point with crusted ink or fibres. Study the construction of each letter before you start and it will then not be necessary to retrace them.

Italics is the name given to all styles of lettering when they are written with a slant. Care should be taken that the inclination is always uniform.

The next style shown is a plain roundhand and is the simplest form produced by square pens. Unlike the block lettering, the capitals should not be used alone, being too ornate for easy reading, but in conjunction with small letters this style is one of the most attractive for stamp collections.

For practising, a fairly large-size pen should be used, such as No. 3, giving a

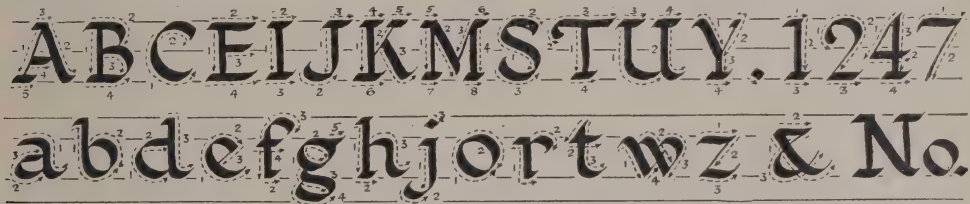
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U
 V W X Y Z. a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t
 u v w x y z. Provisional issue of 1895.

The elementals: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O
 P Q R S T U V W X Y Z. W V
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Small letters should be 5 nib-
 widths high, thus: ea, ea

lettering about 5 mm. high, that is five times the width of the nib. The pen should be held at an angle of forty-five degrees, so that an upward stroke from left to right will be thin, while a downward stroke from left to right will yield the

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ.
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.
 123456789. Compound Perf.

The elemental strokes for this style are the same as for Roundhand



HEADINGS - GREAT BRITAIN - PORTUGAL - U.S.A.

3. BLOCK ROUNDHAND

maximum thickness. Never apply pressure to square pens or the thick strokes will not be uniform.

The elemental strokes are approximately the same as for block lettering, but owing to the shape of the pen the resulting effect is quite different. The shape of the letters requires the use of curves much more than of straight lines and their construction should be carefully studied from the sketch as it does not follow what appears to be the obvious way.

For instance, it would seem natural to write a capital "C" at one stroke, but this would involve pushing the pen point foremost with the possibility of spluttering or digging into the paper. The better way is to form the "C" in three strokes, each drawn downwards. The same applies to all other letters: always construct them by downward or sideways strokes regardless of the number of strokes that will be necessary.

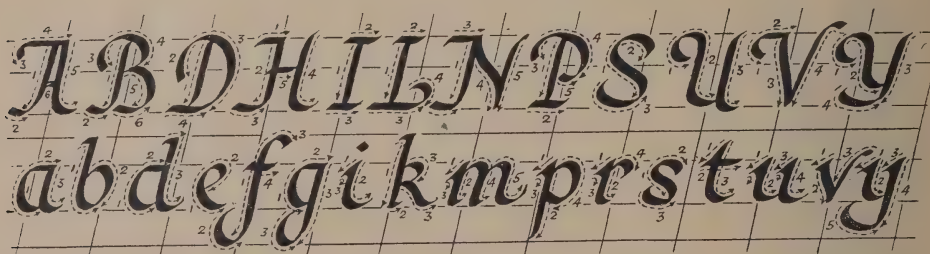
It will at first seem impossible to connect up the component strokes without showing the join, but after a little practice there will be no difficulty in making a flawless curve.

Whether you are eventually going to write-up your collection in this or another of the square pen styles, it is well to practise until you can obtain graceful results with

the simple roundhand before attempting the more elaborate styles which are derived from it.

The next lettering illustrated is based on plain roundhand but with the addition of serifs to the small letters and the elimination of the loops of ascending letters. The capitals show a tendency towards block lettering, and on account of their more uniform

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V X Y Z. a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
o p r s t u v w x y z. Printed by Ash



In Italic lettering all the letters must have the same slant.

4. ROUNDHAND ITALICS

appearance can be used alone very effectively for the titles at the top of each page or at the beginning of a country.

The beauty of this lettering is in its low and expanded appearance; it should not be spoiled by contracting the letters or otherwise altering the proportions shown.

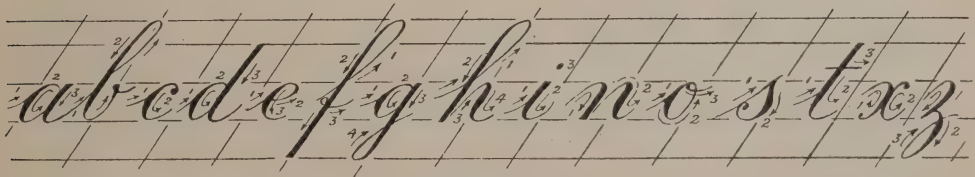
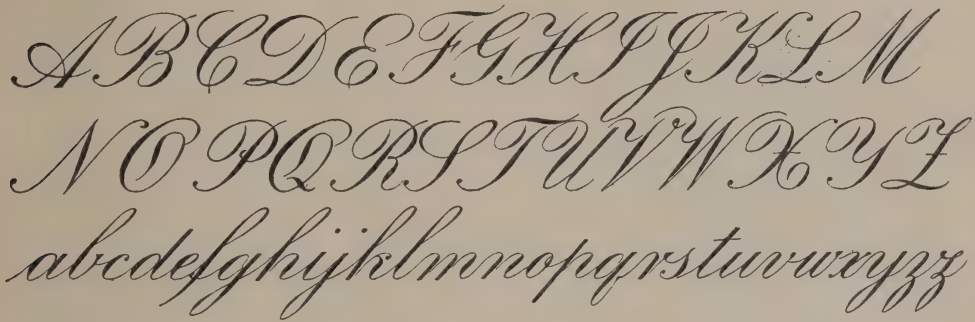
If a taller lettering is required in order to get more words to a line it will be better to slant the letters, thereby obtaining what are called Roundhand Italics. A smaller nib should be used of a width of a sixth instead of a fifth of the height of the small letters. The capitals are more elongated and made more ornate by the extension of the serifs.

All three styles are most effective in stamp collections as they are neither too light to be readable nor so heavy as to be overpowering, and the choice of one is entirely a matter of taste.

The next two examples are produced by fine-pointed pens—and a delicate touch.

We all remember copper-plate from our school days and our disappointing efforts at copying curves that seemed possible only with a compass.

I am afraid there are no secrets to be disclosed as a short cut to success. The only recommendation I can give is that a good flowing ink be used and that the pen be kept clean. Practise by writing in a size larger than would be used in a collection, and with pencilled oblique lines every half-inch to indicate the correct slant. The points to watch are a uniform inclination and an even thickness of the strokes. A rather finer



5. COPPER-PLATE

Issue consisting of 6 values

6. ITALICS

surfaced paper or card is necessary than is used for other types of lettering, as the pen is apt to follow the crevices or pick up fibres of the paper.

With a little practice and patience you will be surprised how soon you will produce a lettering which, if not perfect in detail, is at least of quite pleasing appearance when seen in the mass.

If a mistake has been made blot the wet ink as quickly as possible and leave it a few minutes to dry. If only one or two letters are wrong do not attempt to scratch them out before correcting, but, on the contrary, superimpose the correct ones over

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them and, when dry, scratch out the parts of the error that show with a sharp penknife. In this manner the surface of the paper will not be spoilt nor result in the correction spreading. Errors in white ink are easily obliterated with indian ink.

There are various ink eradicators on the market, but so far I have not found one which is effective with indian ink. Some time after using those I have tried, a yellow stain appeared on the paper.

CHAPTER IX

ARRANGING A GENERAL COLLECTION

THE preceding chapters have been devoted to the preparation of what I might call the elements of our picture. We have selected the album, the stamps are sorted into issues, and we have chosen the style of writing, so that we may now go ahead with the arrangement of these elements to form a display that will be artistic as well as efficient. All our efforts at good lettering would be ineffective if the stamps were poorly arranged.

As we see only one page at a time when we look at a collection each should be considered as a separate picture and built up as if it were the only one, the sole link between the individual pages being uniformity of style.

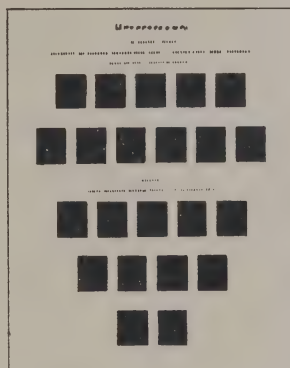
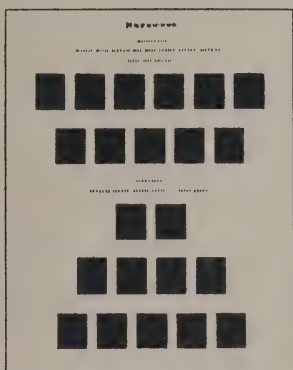
Good display is a combination of symmetry, balance, and lucidity, and is not difficult to obtain if a few principles are observed.

By symmetry is understood the grouping of the elements so that the left side is the same as the right, while balance is a grouping that is pleasing to the eye. For example, if the stamps are arranged in perfect alignment in a number of rows of equal length they will be symmetrical, but they will not be balanced because they will appear bottom-heavy on account of the downward pull on the eye.

To facilitate arrangement practically all blank leaves sold for stamp collections have the centre lines of the *quadrillé* pattern marked by a heavier stroke where they intersect or touch the outer line. The vertical centre line is the more important and it is on either side of it that the stamps should be arranged. In this we are favoured, since most stamps are little rectangles perfectly balanced in themselves and therefore often requiring nothing more than a symmetrical disposition on either side of the centre line. I have seen many collections in which the effort of balancing had been shirked by starting each issue against the left-hand margin, leaving the right side more or less blank according to the length of the set. Such arrangements are obviously unsightly because they disregard both symmetry and balance, and while they may be suitable for dealers' stock books, they should be avoided by collectors aiming at the good appearance of their collections.

Some collectors prefer not to mount their stamps always in straight lines. They may, for example, bring the outer stamps of a line rather below the level of the others, other lines being adjusted to give an artistic effect to the whole page.

Provided that such an arrangement is not carried to excess, as when the stamps on a page are arranged in diamonds or circles, there is not very much to be said against it, except that it makes the inclusion of the headings and notes more difficult.



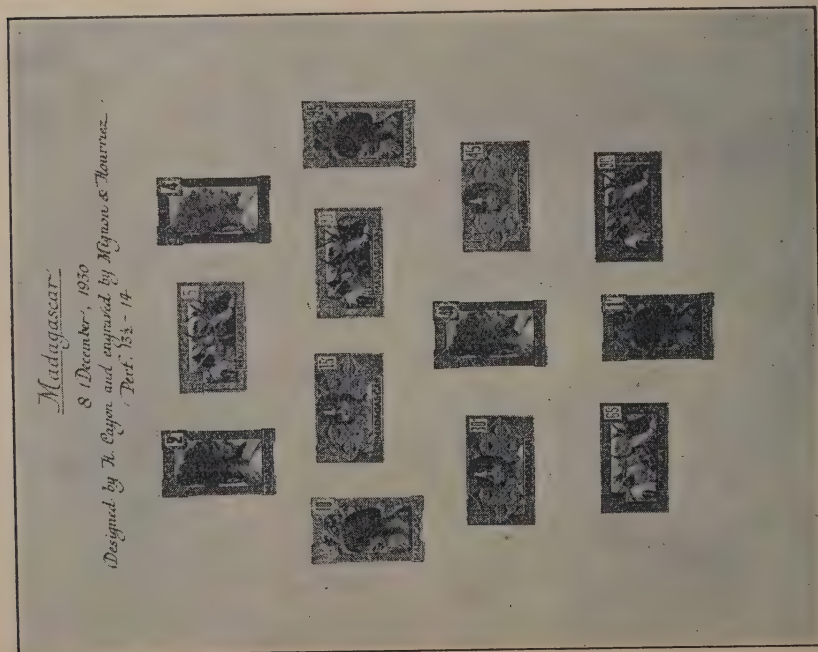
THE FIRST DIAGRAM SHOWS POOR ARRANGEMENT. BY SLIGHTLY ALTERING THE ROWS A MUCH BETTER DISPLAY IS OBTAINED IN THE SECOND

For the ordinary collector, however, the straight-line method is best, where the stamps in a set are all of the same size.

When stamps are of varying sizes, as in many pictorial issues, a more difficult problem presents itself, and it is sometimes debated whether it is best to disregard symmetry and place the stamps in order of value or to make symmetry the first consideration. There should be no hesitation in choosing appearance in preference to numerical order. As a rule it is possible with a little thought to effect a compromise whereby balance is obtained without moving some of the values more than a little way from their correct positions.

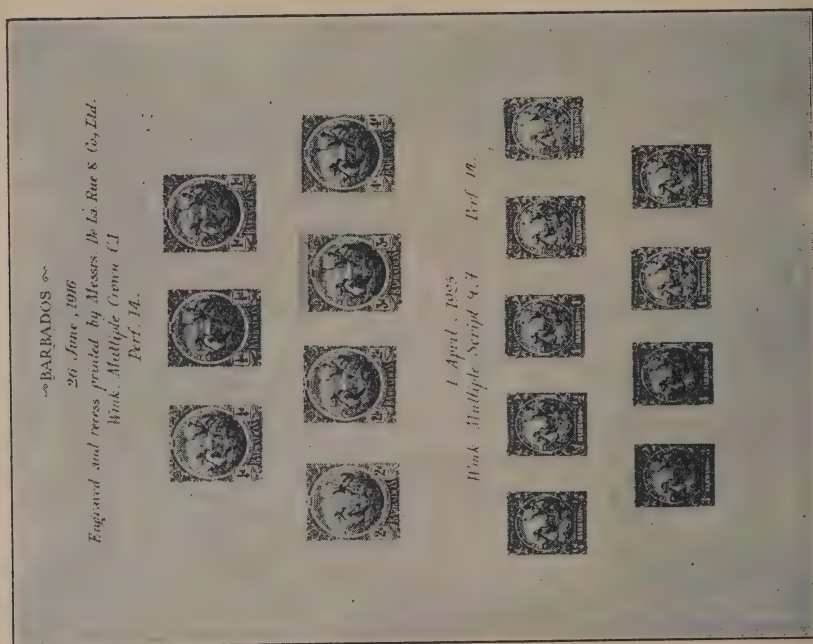
If it is impossible to balance certain shapes in one line, for example when there are three tall stamps and one broad one in a set, it is better to place the odd one on a separate line.

Whenever the high values of a long set are in a different unit of currency, or if they differ from the low values by design or type, they should be on a line by themselves. It is in fact a general principle that some endeavour should always be made to group similar parts of a set. If there are several shades or dies of a stamp they should all be in the same line and not partly on two rows; this is not so much a question of balance as of lucidity of display.



A GOOD ARRANGEMENT OF A SET OF STAMPS OF MIXED SHAPES

Note the spacing of headings and rows of stamps.



A NEAT PAGE OF STAMPS OF SAME SHAPE

In all questions relating to the effective arrangement of his stamps, the collector should disregard any consideration of economy of space. The small saving achieved by using less leaves will be far outweighed by the loss of attractiveness caused by over-crowding.

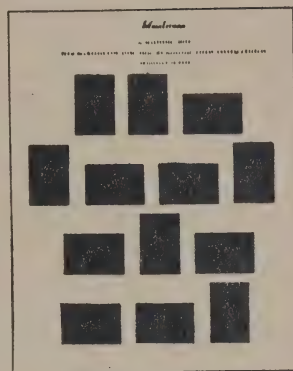
So far the study of arrangement has been in regard to the right and left sides of the page, but the upper and lower halves, although less important, should be given some consideration. The mistake to avoid is in having too many stamps at the top of the page, resulting in top-heaviness, or at the bottom which is equally inartistic. Owing to the optical downward pull I have already referred to, the line on which these two halves balance is not the horizontal half-way line, but at a point slightly above it and known as the optical centre or eye-line. For this reason a choice stamp will always receive quicker attention if placed a third of the way down the middle of the page. If the stamps are arranged in five rows the second and third from the top should be the longest, the others shorter in varying degrees. It is surprising what variety of arrangement can be made with the other rows once the eye-line row has been established. The importance of the point can be judged from our two diagrams on page 37, the first illustrating the mistake of making the top and bottom rows the longest, and resulting in a disjointed display.

The spacing of the stamps has a considerable bearing on the appearance of the finished work, and the number of squares that will be left between each stamp should be determined and retained as much as possible throughout the collection. Most leaves are ruled three squares to the centimetre; in this gauge "two squares" spacing will be found the most generally effective; "three squares" is good between large stamps or if it is desired to give the collection a very roomy appearance; "one square" spacing is too close and really suitable only for small leaves.

A uniform spacing between the rows should also be maintained as nearly as possible throughout the collection, although a variation is sometimes desirable if it permits the better filling of a page. The number of rows to an average page such as in the Simplex, Oriel, or G.H.S. albums will depend on the amount of writing and the size of the stamps; five rows usually give a pleasing effect, or six if there is only one heading.

Where the page has a heavy printed frame border stamps should not be mounted too near it, but where the page has a central *quadrillé*-ruled area without a frame, the outer stamps can, if necessary, be placed within one square's distance from the edge of the *quadrillé* area.

When about to begin the work of arranging, *the leaves should be taken out of the cover and ruled in readiness for the heading of the country.* There is usually a wide margin



WHAT TO AVOID

This is what the set of Madagascar on the opposite page would have looked like if arranged in order of value.

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above the *quadrillé* ground for this purpose, and a feint pencil line should be drawn about 5 mm. from the top of the squares.

At this point a timely hint that will result in better work and save collectors the loss of many expensive leaves is to arrange all the stamps, at the same time making the necessary notes *in pencil before* starting any of the final writing-up in ink. In this way mistakes are easily corrected, arrangements altered if necessary, and headings better centred.

If catalogue numbers are required, these should always be written in pencil, as otherwise the page will have to be scrapped if any re-arrangement of its contents is undertaken.

For those who feel themselves capable of centring the headings correctly above each issue it will be sufficient to make abbreviated notes in the margin when arranging, but, I am sure, the great majority will be well advised to pencil in the complete headings as they will appear finally. After a little experience one can judge from the rough notes how much space the headings will take and thereby start at the exact spot that will ensure them beginning and ending at equal distances from the centre line. If written lightly all the pencil notes are easily rubbed out when the page is finished. When writing-up a black-leaf album, notes will have to be made on separate pieces of paper.

Assuming that the collection is a straightforward one to be arranged in the same order as the catalogue with just the most necessary details, all that need be included above each issue is the date, special purpose of the issue if any (e.g. Air Post stamps, Commemoratives, etc.), watermark, and perforation.

If the name of the country is placed as already suggested in the top margin, the date of issue should come not nearer than the second line of the *quadrillé*; this will leave the equivalent of three squares while the remaining sub-headings may have two squares between them and again two squares between the last and the top of the stamps. Leave three or four squares between the rows.

If there is more than one issue on a page, at least three or four lines should be left between one issue and the next heading, but this should be increased if necessary to avoid leaving a big gap at the foot of the page. I strongly advise laying out the stamps loosely in their approximate positions on the page and working them about until the best effect is obtained before any mounting is done.

Always look a few issues ahead to avoid arranging three-quarters of a page only to find that you will not get the whole of the next set in the space left. It is always preferable to expand, in such cases, rather than to split an issue.

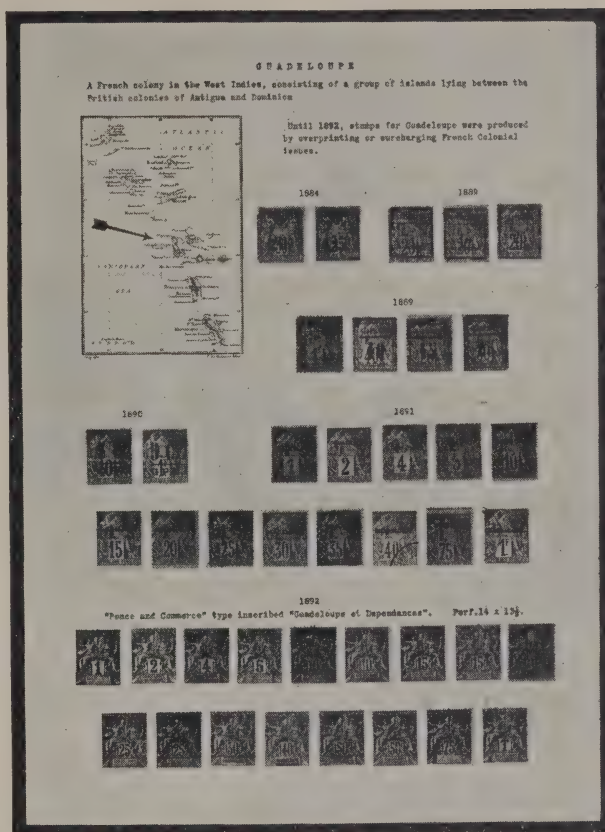
When arranging varieties, judgment should be used to determine whether comparison with the normal stamp would be useful or not. A stamp of a different die, for example, should be placed alongside the normal in the set with "I" and "II" written above them, but errors such as inverted surcharges, wrong spellings, etc., will attract greater attention if placed with appropriate description below the normal issue.

If used stamps are included in the collection as an *alternative* to unused, they will, of course, take their places in their respective sets, but where unused and used stamps are both taken, they should be mounted as distinct sets and not mixed together. If the series is of moderate length it will be possible to get unused and used sets on the same page, but with longer issues a separate page will be required for each. As already stated, it is advisable to avoid splitting sets, but in this case unused and used can be regarded as separate sets.

The normal unused and used sets should precede the pages allotted to errors and varieties of the same, except where these have to be near the normals for comparison, or where you only have one or two varieties which will fit into available space at the foot of your normal pages.

The question of leaving blank space for stamps you have not yet got must depend on your decision as to the scope of your collection. You may aim to get everything listed in the catalogue, or you can whittle down the lists by excluding shades or perfs. or minor varieties. You may feel sure that you will never pay more than a certain sum for a stamp, and this will give you another line of delimitation.

It is therefore advisable, in planning the main pages of your album, to allow space only for those stamps you intend or hope to get, and to camouflage judiciously the absence of those which you know will never grace your collection. Errors and varieties can always find a place on extra pages, but a gap in the normal issue which can never be filled is an unnecessary reminder of incompleteness.



A VERY NEAT COLLECTION BASED ON THE "SIMPLIFIED" CATALOGUE, WITH HEADINGS TYPEWRITTEN DIRECTLY ON THE PAGE, AND DRAWN MAP

The page is from the large size "Philatelic A" album and shows the great number of stamps it can accommodate.

When a volume has thus been arranged and the headings prepared the writing-up in ink may be started. The names of countries should be done first, as if they are in larger lettering than the issue headings they will require a larger pen. A little fancy work may also be permitted such as a red initial or the whole name in red underlined with black, which is very effective. Whatever colour or style the headings are written in, care should be taken that they are well centred as it is the spot the eye will see first. This is easily done by writing the name out on a spare piece of *quadrillé* paper, counting the number of squares it takes, and marking the length on the actual page. For the other headings above the issues, guidance for length will have to be obtained from the pencilled notes.

If any underlining is to be done it should be left till the last and carried out with a ruling pen, to which reference has already been made in an earlier chapter; with it a very fine and regular line can be drawn without fear of the ink running along the ruler.

The concluding job is to rub out all pencil marks and replace the leaves in the cover.

If the reader is convinced, after due trial, that he or she will never be able to write-up a collection effectively by hand, there are still two choices—the use of a typewriter, or gummed writing-up labels, which are the subject of a separate chapter

For most album pages a “brief” size machine will be needed, and if it is being purchased specially for philatelic purposes, special attention should be paid to the style of lettering it carries, as some styles are much more attractive than others.

The general rules given above apply also to writing-up a collection on the typewriter, but it is necessary, before putting the page in the machine, to lay out the stamps in their proper positions on the page and to mark by pencil dots the points on which the writing is to be centred. The stamps are then removed, the headings and notes typed in, and the stamps can then be mounted.

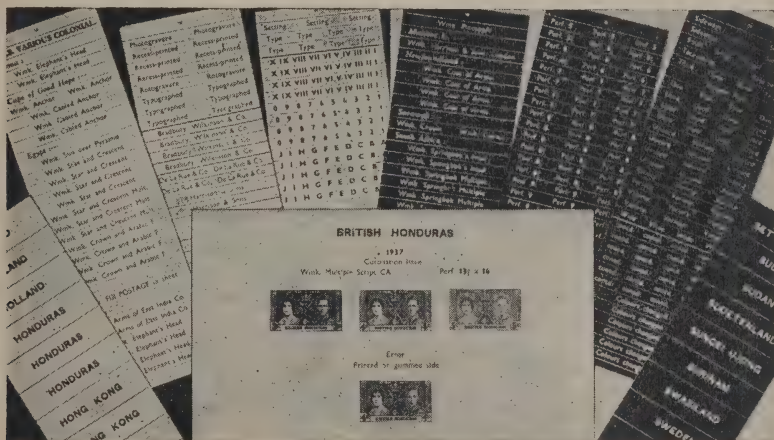
As each typewritten letter or character is allotted an equal space, the collector will soon find it easy to estimate how much space a given note or heading will occupy and the work can then proceed very quickly. It will also be helpful to note that so many typewritten letters occupy a certain number of *quadrillé* squares.

If a typewriter large enough to take the leaves is not available, the notes may be typed on gummed paper and then cut out and affixed to the page, but the result is not so effective as that obtained by typing directly on the page.

CHAPTER X

WRITING-UP LABELS

THE latest method of writing-up to be made available to collectors is one in which descriptions are sold ready-printed on gummed paper for sticking on the album leaves. For those who are not satisfied with their handwriting and who are still anxious to give

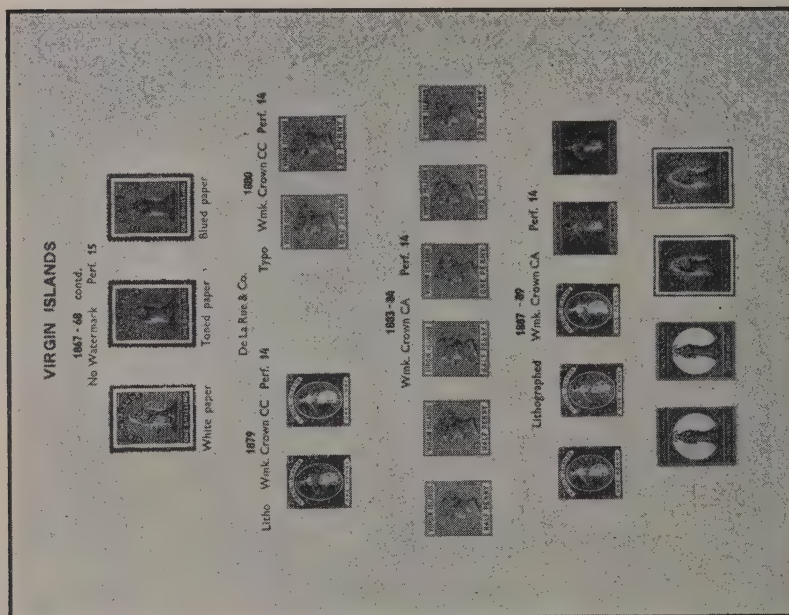


their collections an attractive finish this method is the most practicable and economical yet devised. The labels are published by Stanley Gibbons Ltd.

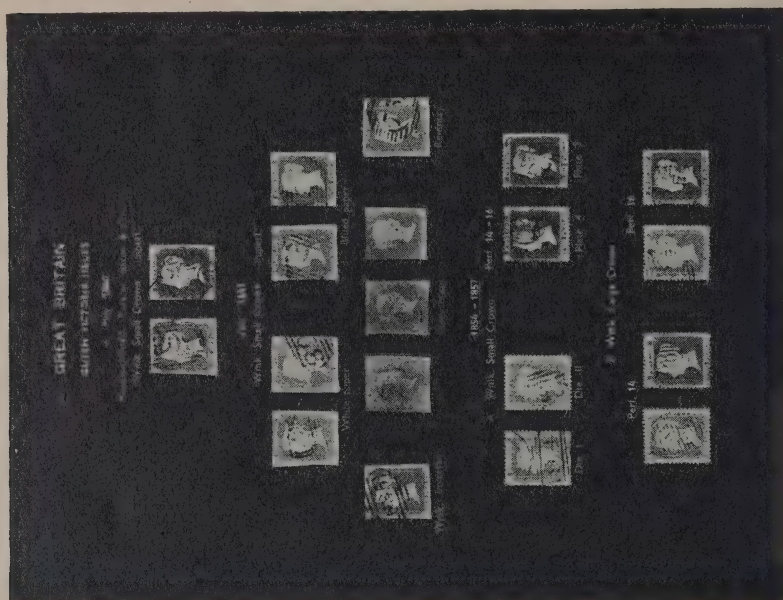
Two editions exist, one printed in black on white paper for ordinary blank albums and the other printed in white on black paper for black-leaf albums. Both are made up into booklets each containing hundreds of different descriptions which are so arranged as to be easily cut out and assembled to form whatever heading is considered necessary. After being neatly trimmed they need only to be moistened and stuck in position to provide a very effective form of writing-up.

Collectors who have made use of the booklets of titles of countries which have already been in existence for some years may now complete the writing-up of their collections with these labels which form a supplement to the titles. The inclusion of sub-headings for stamp groups not previously provided for renders all sorts of arrangements possible.

Before starting it is advisable to become thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the booklet and to plan at what length issues are to be described. It is obviously impossible to provide, within the limits of a small book, for the more extended form



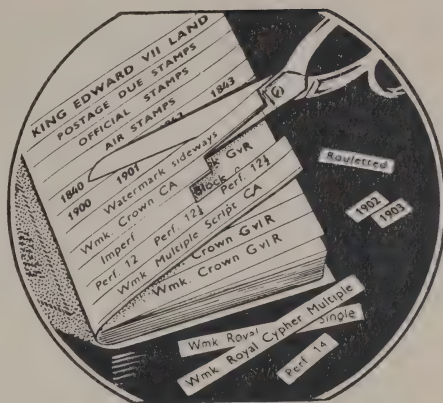
AN ORTHODOX COLLECTION ON WHITE LEAVES



A MORE SPECIALISED COLLECTION ON BLACK LEAVES

Examples of collection headed and annotated entirely with writing-up labels.

which can be employed when writing-up by hand. Where economy is a consideration, it will be better to avoid repeating particulars of successive issues where they are the same and to include only those details which distinguish one issue from another. For example, perforation, or watermark, or both, often remain the same through successive British Colonial issues. The change of date should then be sufficient to imply that other particulars are the same as before. Similarly it may be considered unnecessary to include the names of the printers except in cases where identical stamps are printed by different printers and constitute distinctive varieties, as in the 1855 and 1863 issues of the Cape of Good Hope.



By intelligent use the contents of a single booklet may be made to go a long way and some quite advanced specialised collections have been very adequately annotated by means of these labels.

Although the instructions in the booklet only refer to scissors or a razor blade for cutting out, a photographic print trimmer will be found superior to either.

CHAPTER XI

ARRANGING "SUBJECT" AND SPECIALISED COLLECTIONS

WHEN the collector is dealing with a "subject" collection—for example, a zoological collection—he has a much more interesting task, as he has not to consider any question of the order in which his stamps were issued (he may, in fact, be dealing with stamps from many different countries), but merely how best to arrange them in order to illustrate his subject.

Balance and symmetry should, of course, still be observed and some ingenuity will be needed to reconcile these factors with the need for telling one's stamp story in the proper sequence, or at least approximately so. In the "zoo" collection, for example, animals should not be mixed with reptiles or birds, and as far as possible the different groups of mammals should be kept together, on the lines of Professor Renouf's *The Stamp Zoo* published in the "Stanphil" series of stamp books.

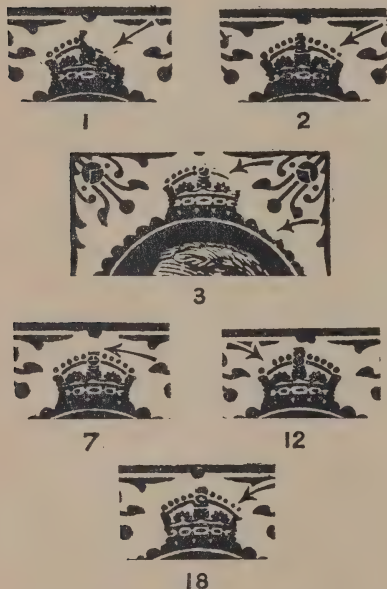
Again, if the life of Columbus is the subject of a collection, stamps depicting early

events, or bearing portraits of him when a young man, should precede those which deal with his later life. Here and there, it will be necessary to allow oneself a little licence but, generally speaking, the necessary grouping can be achieved without disregarding balance or symmetry. A good knowledge of stamp designs, gained from the *Stanley Gibbons' Stamp Catalogue*, will be helpful, for it may then be possible to select

an alternative stamp showing the same person, place or event, instead of one which will not fit into your arrangement.

In subject collections, the values of the stamps are disregarded and only one stamp of each design or subject is needed. It should, of course, be selected with careful reference to the general colour balance of the page you are arranging, if there is sufficient scope for choice, for some colours "kill" those of the adjacent stamps, and while this cannot be avoided when complete sets have to be arranged in a general collection, you have more freedom of choice in a collection in which the stamp designs are the important factor.

The arrangement of a specialised collection to show the result of the owner's studies and researches presents many difficulties. In some such collections there is much to say about every stamp, while in others several pages of written introduction seem necessary before we come to the stamps themselves. Remembering the rules laid down in Chapter V, the owners of specialised collections should study the art of expressing



SKETCHES OF HONG KONG STAMPS WITH
VARIETIES POINTED OUT BY ARROWS

themselves concisely. If the collection is one which will be displayed at meetings and exhibitions, the descriptions must be very lucid, and a statement divided up into short paragraphic notes, logically arranged, is very much more effective than descriptive notes written in the style of an article. Every word that is not absolutely necessary should be left out.

In many cases a great deal of verbal description can be avoided by the use of small sketches, illustrating on a large scale details not readily apparent from an examination of the stamp. Even a rough sketch, by a collector who lays no claim to artistic skill, will be well worth the doing.

Space will sometimes be saved by making a large-scale sketch or outline of a stamp and indicating on it all varieties shown in the collection.

To draw attention to varieties on stamps in the middle of large blocks, a strip of transparent paper may be run across the block and on this an explanatory sketch may be

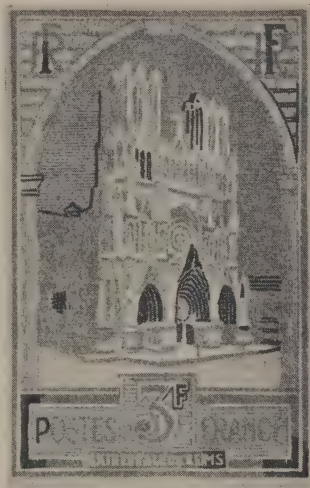
drawn indicating both the position of the variety in the block and the details to which it is desired to draw attention. If a sketch is not necessary, an indicator arrow may be affixed to the transparent paper.

Those who have no courage for sketching can make use of enlarged photographs of the stamp sections to which they want to draw particular attention. It is not advisable to entrust such work to a photographer inexperienced in stamp work, for the non-philatelic world has strange ideas as to what may be done in order to fix stamps up for photographing. I know of one enthusiast who tried out a new firm, and who found that his cherished specimens had been *pinned* in position.

The question of balance and symmetry, in connection with a specialised collection, takes on quite a different aspect from that presented in a general collection. In the latter, we have rows of stamps and, usually, lines of writing, but in the specialised collection we often have a disproportionate amount of writing, to which may be added sketches, photographs, tables of settings, etc., while the stamps themselves may be supplemented by covers, and there will often be blocks, pairs, and even sheets to be dealt with. Obviously the proper arrangement of such a mass of material and information is a complex problem, but one very fascinating to solve.

If the collection is one of those in which specialised study has been superimposed on a backbone consisting of a straightforward display, the simplified collection might well be arranged first, as if it were part of a general collection, i.e. the straightforward issues, unused and used, will be allotted to their pages and arranged and written-up as already described.

If blocks and pairs run right through the collection in addition to singles, the collector will have to decide whether he will put these larger items on separate pages, or group them with the singles. Pages bearing nothing but blocks of four tend to look heavy, and in many collections an effective grouping can be obtained by putting the blocks and pairs with the single specimens. Some collectors with plenty of money go so far as to take as many stamps as are necessary to secure effective balance, even where some of them are duplicates, but with a little ingenuity the less lavish collector will be able to group his non-specialised material, blocks, pairs, and singles, effectively in a homogeneous and straightforward collection which, when arranged and written-up will form the backbone for his specialised study.



This method of sketching is particularly suitable where it is desired to illustrate and locate a number of varieties of the same nature occurring in an issue when individual sketching would appear scrappy. It consists of a lightly printed photograph of a normal stamp on which all the varieties it is desired to show are traced over in indian ink. Reference numbers may be added to each and repeated above the corresponding stamps.

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Next let him group the special items of each issue (or value, if the collection is on a big scale), and divide these into sections according to the class of variety they show. Thus re-entries, postmarks, shades, covers, and so on, will form separate classes, each of which can be arranged on its page or pages, though the division between the straight-forward part of the collection and the specialised should not be too rigid. For example,

an odd cover, not specially needed anywhere else, will often serve to round off a page only partly filled with a particular issue.

There will also be many occasions when a particular specimen is needed to illustrate points in two sections of the collection; for example, a stamp which shows a marked retouch and which also bears an outstanding type of postmark. In such cases, the stamp should be placed in the section in which it will be most useful for comparison, and a written cross-reference will have to be made in its alternative

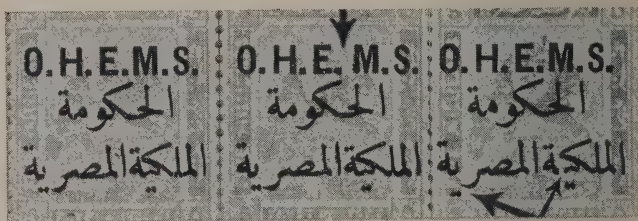


Re-entries illustrated by drawing in indian ink on lightly-printed photographs.

position, the album pages being numbered (in pencil) in order that this may be done.

Stamps with marginal paper attached present a subsidiary problem. My own feeling is that marginal paper that gives no information (i.e. which does not bear an imprint, "control," plate number, or other indication which teaches something of the history of the particular stamp), has no place in a collection, but in view of the high prices obtained for corner marginal blocks of early issues and even single stamps with margin, this opinion may be hard to justify as regards even modern issues in a few years' time.

If one or two stamps in your set have marginal plate numbers attached, it may be possible to preserve symmetry by doing some slight violence to numerical order. It would be better, however, to complete your main set with non-marginal stamps and allot a separate line to your plate numbers below.



By photographing through suitable coloured screens the design of a stamp can be faded out and cause the overprint to stand out more clearly, as above.

A corner block with margins on two sides, or a strip of three stamps with two margins, the bottom one showing a "control," are awkward things to arrange neatly on an album page, for from their very nature they are lop-sided.

The best method in such cases (and this applies to a collection of such items also) is to mount each separate block or strip on a piece of thin black paper, a small margin of which is allowed to project all round.

The black paper is then treated as the unit and placed on the album page as balance and symmetry require.

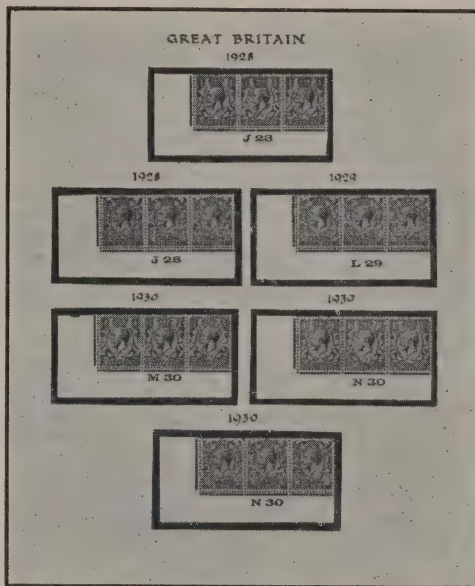
The eye sees block and paper as a whole and the effect of lop-sidedness disappears.

If a collection is arranged on these lines, we shall have, in each issue, first a straight-forward display of the major varieties in singles, with pairs and

blocks in addition, if these are taken, used stamps being grouped after the unused, either on the same pages when space permits, or on following pages. Then will come pages devoted to errors (where these will not find a convenient niche on the general pages), varieties, postmarks, and so on, all grouped in logical sequence—a sequence, by the way, that reminds us that essays, proofs, artists' sketches, and "SPECIMEN" stamps should precede each issue, where they are available.

In arranging these specialised pages, the balance to be aimed at is rather the balance of the advertisement "lay-out" man, than the mathematical regularity suggested for a general collection at the beginning of this chapter. Symmetry, too, will have a different meaning, for we obviously cannot always group our illustrations, descriptive notes, photographs, and sketches so that they fall evenly on either side of the centre line of the page. We may have a page on which there is a block of nine stamps, a fifty-word note, and a table of the setting. In such a case, a diagonal arrangement of the block and the table may be advisable, with the notes arranged to conform.

Every page of a specialised collection will present its own problem, and half the pleasure in arranging a collection to look its best consists in solving these problems to one's own satisfaction.



Controls and pieces with lop-sided appearance may be improved by mounting on black paper.

CHAPTER XII

ARRANGING DISPLAYS AND EXHIBITS

WHATEVER may be his opinion as to the desirability of properly arranging and writing-up his collection, there are occasions when it is absolutely necessary for the collector to deal with at least a portion of his treasures to the best of his ability. If he is to display one of his countries at a meeting of a philatelic society it is a matter of courtesy to those who will be present, while any attempt to gain a cup or medal at a stamp exhibition is unlikely to be successful if he has paid no attention to arrangement.

Assuming that he has studied the preceding chapters of this book, the reader should be familiar with the processes necessary for making the best of his collection, but there are special considerations in connection with displays and exhibitions which call for careful thought.

In displaying stamps to members of a philatelic society regard must be paid to the method of display. At many meetings, each sheet to be shown is handed to the chairman as the owner begins to describe it in his spoken commentary, and from the chairman it passes to the other members present in rotation.

The result of this system is that only the chairman sees the stamps at the moment when the owner is talking about them, and the remaining persons present are faced with the choice between looking at the stamps when they reach them and disregarding the speaker's remarks, or of listening to the talk and missing the opportunity of examining the stamps. As an extreme example, I have been sitting at the tail-end of a large meeting when the *first* sheet of stamps reached me just as the speaker concluded his descriptive talk. This method of conducting displays can only be regarded as a thoroughly bad one.

Another method, which is a great improvement, is to have the sheets of stamps laid out on a table or shown in frames during the early part of the meeting so that those present can make themselves generally familiar with the display. The owner then gives his talk, which can be listened to without the distraction caused by stamps being passed round, and after that the audience goes back to the display to study more closely any particular items which have aroused their special interest.

At some society meetings a combination of the above methods is adopted, the pages of the collection specifically referred to being handed round during the owner's talk, and the remaining pages being displayed in the room for examination before and after the main proceedings.

It is obvious that, before arranging his display, the collector must know which of these systems will be followed. If all the sheets are to be handed round while he is speaking he will have to remember that the majority of his audience will not see a particular page while he is talking about it and that he cannot therefore rely on his verbal

explanations to take the place of written notes on the album pages. He must write-up his display fully and deal with the essential points also in his talk, though realising that very few will hear what he says once the pages begin to circulate. (This prompts the suggestion that he should crowd as much interest as possible into his preliminary remarks which precede the handing round of the display.)

Where the stamps are exhibited separately and not handed round during the talk, the technical and other details which depend upon an examination of the stamps should be included in the write-up of the pages and the spoken comments, while not omitting reference to such details where necessary, can be extended to a more general survey of the subject.

While on this subject, perhaps a word on the selection of material for display may not be out of place. In some societies the number of pages to be shown is limited, and this, of course, necessitates careful choice where the owner has a large collection. Where there is no limiting rule it is still advisable to cut down the number of pages, and devote proper consideration to each, rather than to attempt to display hurriedly the whole of a large collection. (Where the whole or part of the collection is to be displayed and not handed round, limitation need not be so drastic, but even so it is better to show too little rather than too much.)

In choosing the pages for a display the best method is to try and build up a show which will convey the full interest of the subject under discussion, even if this necessitates forming a special condensed collection for the occasion instead of merely showing a selection of existing pages as they stand.

Remember that *you* have a particular interest in your subject, but that the majority of your audience, being either specialists in other countries or else general collectors, cannot be expected to share that interest unless you are able to convey it to them in your talk and by your written notes. The stamps you show must therefore, so far as possible, have a wide appeal. Some of your audience will be able to appreciate the interest of technical philatelic points, but for others you must provide interesting side-lights on postal history, chatty descriptions of how you acquired some of your best items, remarks about the designs of the stamps, and an indication of the value of your rarities. If all collectors remembered the need for bringing out the "general interest" of their subject when giving displays, society meetings would not be the boring occasions they so frequently are.

It is obvious from what has been said, that the writing-up of the pages shown must also emphasise the interest of the display from as many angles as possible, and this is another reason for building up a special summarised collection rather than showing selected sheets, as already arranged.

When we turn to exhibitions, and particularly the big international competitive exhibitions, different factors have to be taken into consideration. Here the whole collection will be entered and examined by the judges, but only a proportion of it will be on view to the public in the frames.

You will be permitted to apply for as much space as the exhibition rules allow to

a single competitor, but in most cases you cannot be sure of getting even the space officially allotted to you, as drastic cuts are often made at the last minute due to pressure on space.

It is best, therefore, to consider your collection in three ways : (a) as a whole, (b) as to the proportion required to fill the space you hope to have allotted to you in the public frames, and (c) as to what you will want to show to the public in the minimum space the committee can possibly be cruel enough to cut you down to.

Study the exhibition rules very carefully as soon as they are available and also later editions of the rules as they appear, for alterations are often made. You may find that pages of a particular size are specified for display in the frames, which may involve remounting that part of your collection which is to be publicly shown. Rules restricting the use of "pochettes" may also be laid down and must be strictly observed.

Looking at the collection as a whole, you are aiming to satisfy the judges that it is the best in its particular class. To do this, your notes, while as brief as possible, must convey clearly everything that is likely to influence the judges and particularly (in the case of specialised collections) the lines of any original research you have carried out. As judges have to work hurriedly at great pressure, photographs and drawings, the meaning of which can be grasped at a glance, will be valuable aids to success.

For your display in the frames, it will be a great help if you can ascertain as early as possible what is the absolute minimum of space that is likely to be allotted to you. Collectors who have previously exhibited at international shows may be able to assist you in arriving at an estimate.

Having established a minimum space, work out a really interesting display to occupy it, introducing as much variety as possible, for most visitors to an exhibition are in the same position as many members of the audience at a philatelic society meeting—they have no special knowledge of your subject, though they are willing to be interested. To this minimum display add as many pages as may be necessary (still selected for their general interest) to fill the maximum space you hope to get. When sending your entry it is quite easy to specify that such and such pages *must* be shown in the frames, after which the remaining space available can be filled from pages so-and-so to so-and-so.

In my opinion, the whole of the pages which the public is likely to see, should be written-up from the "interest" point of view, as was suggested for society displays, giving points which may not interest the judges but which will attract the general collector and the man who does not collect.

Collectors may be discouraged from exhibiting at the big shows by the knowledge that some of the collections with which they will be competing have been arranged, written-up, and illustrated by professionals, who are past-masters in the art of making stamps look their best. Too much importance should not, however, be attached to this. A large number of the entries, even at the great international exhibitions, are not well arranged and annotated, yet many of them get prizes. The collector who is able

to show that he has studied his stamps, and who can present them in a neat and logical arrangement and with the necessary minimum of notes legibly written or printed, is not likely to be beaten by a competitor who relies on pretty arrangement alone.

Another type of exhibition which is becoming popular, consists of a display by members of a philatelic society in frames hung in a prominent place in the local



Cards specially arranged for display. Each specimen is clearly described with typewritten labels, and the cards numbered and cellophane-covered.

library or institute. These displays usually deal with pictorial or historical subjects as illustrated by postage stamps, and are changed at frequent intervals. While pages from existing collections may be lent for this purpose, it is sometimes advisable to strike a new note, such as is afforded by mounting the stamps on black card with the descriptive notes in Chinese white. The colours of the stamps show up splendidly against the black background.

Collectors who give pictorial displays to schools and clubs will find that remounting due to soiled leaves, is avoided by using black card, and the stamps themselves can be protected by stretching a thin sheet of transparent cellophane tightly over the surface of the card and gumming the edges of the cellophane to the back.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

FROM correspondence received from readers of this work in serial form, it would seem that many collectors want a series of hard-and-fast rules to follow when arranging a collection. There are many occasions, however, when the collector can achieve equally good and logical results with alternative methods of arrangement, and it is purely a matter of taste which he adopts.

In these notes the authors have attempted to lay down some general principles, which they hope may prove of assistance, but even to these there must be many exceptions. It is in deciding for himself when such exceptions are justified, and in overcoming difficulties when arranging subject and specialised collections, that the collector will find scope for his ingenuity and for the expression of his personality.

One word in conclusion. The majority of us, in these days of typewriters, are firmly convinced that we can neither write neatly nor draw effectively. This is a great fallacy. Everyone whose brain is properly linked up with his fingers, and who is not afflicted with rheumatism or nervous disorder, can, with a little patience and practice, teach himself to write or print neatly, though naturally the best work of this kind will not be done at the same rate as one's ordinary writing.

Sketching is rather more difficult, but here again, everyone of ordinary capacity should be able to execute a passable sketch of a simple nature, after a few attempts have been made.

If the arrangement and writing-up of a collection is undertaken with the will to succeed, and in the conviction that time devoted to it will be time well spent, the pleasure derived from one's stamps will be greatly increased and the pride of ownership in a well-arranged and annotated collection will more than repay the time and trouble involved.

THE END

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